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# DISSERTATION

CONCERNING THE

# ANTIQUITY

OF THE

# *HEBREW*-LANGUAGE,

# LETTERS,

# VOWEL-POINTS,

AND

# ACCENTS.

By *JOHN GILL*, D.D.

Imo vero cenſeo, nullius mortalis, licet in Hebræis literis docte verſati, tantum eſſe acumen, peritiam, perſpicaciam, ut prophetæ noſtro (Jeſaiæ) longe pluribus locis reddere potuerit genuinum ſuum ſenſum; niſi *lectio antiqua ſynagogica* per traditionem in ſcholis Hebræorum fuiſſet conſervata, ut eam nunc *Maſoretharum punctulis* expreſſam habemus: quorum proinde ſtudium et laborem nemo pro merito deprædicet. Quod enim in hoc viridario deliciari poſſimus, ipſis debemus, viris perinde doctis et acri judicio præditis.

*Vitringa*, Præfat. ad Comment. in Jeſaiam, Vol. I. p. 5.

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M, DCC, LXVII.

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THE

# PREFACE.

THE following Diſſertation has long lain by me; nor was it written at firſt with any deſign to publiſh it to the world; but was written at leiſure hours for my own amuſement, and by way of eſſay to try how far back the antiquity of the things treated of in it could be carried. And what has prevailed upon me now to let it go into the world, and take its fate in it, are the confidence which ſome late writers on the oppoſite ſide have expreſſed, their contempt of others that differ from them, and the air of triumph they have aſſumed, as if victory was proclaimed on their ſide, and the controverſy at

an end, which is far from being the caſe; and what ſeeming advantages are obtained, are chiefly owing to the indolence and ſloth of men, who read only on one ſide of the queſtion, and ſuch who write one after another, and take things upon truſt, without examining into them themſelves, either through want of ability, or through unwillingneſs to be at any pains about it.

I CONFESS, it has given me offence to obſerve the *Jews* called by ſuch opprobrious names, as villains, wilful corrupters of the *Hebrew* text, *&c.* It muſt be owned indeed, that they are very ignorant of divine things, and therefore the more to be pitied; and many of them are, no doubt, very immoral perſons; but have we not ſuch of both ſorts among ourſelves? yet, as bad as the *Jews* are, the worſt among them, I believe, would ſooner die, than wilfully corrupt any part of the *Hebrew* Bible. We ſhould not bear falſe

witneſs againſt our neighbours, let them be as bad as they may in other things. I have never, as yet, ſeen nor read any thing, that has convinced me that they have wilfully corrupted any one paſſage in the ſacred text[a], no not that celebrated one in *Pſ.* xxii. 16. Their copiers indeed may have made miſtakes in tranſcribing, which are common to all writings; and the *Jews* meeting with a various reading, they may have preferred one to another, which made moſt for their own ſentiments; nor is this to be wondered at, nor are they to be blamed for it. It lies upon us to rectify the miſtake, and confirm the true reading.

It does not appear, that there ever was any period of time, in which the *Jews* would or could have corrupted the *Hebrew* text; not before the coming of Chriſt, for then they could have no diſpoſition nor temptation to it; and to



[a] See a good Defence of the *Jews* by F. Simon againſt Leo Caſtrius, Morinus and Voſſius in his Diſquiſit. Critic. c. ix. and x.

attempt it would have been to have riſqued the credit of the prophecies in it; nor could they be ſure of any advantage by it: and after the coming of Chriſt, it was not in their power to do it without detection. There were the twelve apoſtles of Chriſt, who were with him from the beginning of his miniſtry, and the ſeventy diſciples preachers of his goſpel, beſides many thouſands of *Jews* in *Jeruſalem*, who in a ſhort time believed in him; and can it be ſuppoſed that all theſe were without an *Hebrew* Bible? and particularly that learned man, the apoſtle *Paul*, brought up at the feet of a learned *Rabbi*, *Gamaliel*; and who out of thoſe writings convinced ſo many that Jeſus was the Chriſt, and who ſpeaks of the *Jews* as having the privilege of the oracles of God committed to them *Rom.* iii. 1, 2. nor does he charge them, nor does he give the leaſt intimation of their being chargeable, with the corruption of them; nor does Chriſt,

Chriſt, nor do any of the apoſtles ever charge them with any thing of this kind. And beſides, there were multitudes of the *Jews* in all parts of the world at this time, where the apoſtles met with them and converted many of them to Chriſt, who, they and their fathers, had lived in a ſtate of diſperſion many years; and can it be thought, they ſhould be without copies of the *Hebrew* Bible, whatever uſe they may be ſuppoſed to have made of the *Greek* verſion? ſo that it does not ſeem credible, that the *Jews* ſhould have it in their power, had they an inclination to it, to corrupt the text without detection. And here I cannot forbear tranſcribing a paſſage from *Jerom* [b], who obſerves, in anſwer to thoſe who ſay the *Hebrew* books were corrupted by the *Jews*, what *Origin* ſaid, "that "Chriſt and his apoſtles, who re- "proved the *Jews* for other crimes, "are quite ſilent about this, the

 "great-

[b] Comment. in Eſaiam, c. 6. fol. 14. G.

" greateſt of all." *Jerom* adds " if " they ſhould ſay, that they were cor- " rupted after the coming of the Lord, " the Saviour, and the preaching of " the apoſtles; I cannot forbear laugh- " ing, that the Saviour, the evange- " liſts and apoſtles ſhould ſo produce " teſtimonies that the *Jews* afterwards " ſhould corrupt." To all which may be added, that the *Jews* are a people always tenacious of their own writings, and of preſerving them pure and incorrupt: an inſtance of this we have in their *Targums* or paraphraſes, which they had in their own hands hundreds of years, before it appears they were known by Chriſtians; in which interval, it lay in their power to make what alterations in them they pleaſed; and had they been addicted to ſuch practices, it is marvellous they did not; ſince they could not but obſerve, there were many things in them, that Chriſtians were capable of improving againſt them, ſhould they come into

into their hands, as in fact they have done; and yet they never dared to make any alterations in them: and had they done any thing of this kind, it is moſt reaſonable to believe, they would have altered the paſſages relating to the Meſſiah; and yet thoſe, and which are many, ſtand full againſt them. Indeed, according to *Origen*[c], as ſome think, the *Targums* were known very early, and improved againſt the *Jews* in favour of Jeſus being the true Meſſiah, agreeable to the ſenſe of the prophets; ſince he makes mention of a diſpute between *Jaſon*, an *Hebrew*-Chriſtian, ſuppoſed to be the ſame as in *Acts* xvii. 5. and *Papiſcus*, a *Jew*; in which, he ſays, the Chriſtian ſhewed from *Jewiſh* writings, that the prophecies concerning Chriſt agreed with Jeſus; and what elſe, ſays Dr. *Allix*[d], could he mean by *Jewiſh* writings, but the *Targums*? though



[c] Contra Celſum, l. 4. p. 199. [d] Judgment of the ancient Jewiſh Church, &c. p. 376.

though it is poſſible the writings of the Old Teſtameant may be meant, by which the apoſtle *Paul* alſo proved that Jeſus was the Chriſt. However, if the *Targums* are meant, they do not afterwards appear to have been known by chriſtian writers for ſome hundreds of years.

It may be ſaid, perhaps, that the *Jews* are ſelf-condemned, and that it may be proved out of their own mouths and writings, that they have in ſome places wilfully corrupted the *Hebrew* text; as the *thirteen* places they own they changed, on the account of *Ptolemy* king of *Egypt*; and alſo what they call *Tikkun Sopherim*, the ordination of the ſcribes, and *Ittur Sopherim*, the ablation of the ſcribes: as to the firſt of theſe, it is true, that they ſay [e], when *Ptolemy* king of *Egypt* deſired to have their law, and ſeventy men ſent to tranſlate it, that they

[e] T. Hieroſ. Megillah, fol. 71. 4. T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 9. 1. Maſſechet Sopherim, c. 1. ſ. 8. fol. 8. 1.

they made alterations in the copy they ſent; but then it ſhould be obſerved, that they do not ſay they made any alteration in their own copies, only in that they ſent to him; and which appears alſo to be a mere fable of the *Talmudiſts*, and that in fact no ſuch alterations were made: but the ſtory was invented, partly to bring into diſgrace the *Greek* verſion of the *Seventy*, as if it was made after a corrupt copy; and partly to make the minds of their own people eaſy, who diſapproved of that work, and kept a faſt on occaſion of it[f]. My reaſon for this is, becauſe the *Greek* verſion does not correſpond with the pretended alterations. There are but two places out of the thirteen, which agree with them; the one is in *Gen.* ii. 2. which the *Seventy* tranſlate, *and on the ſixth day God ended his work*; the other is in *Numb.* xvi. 15. which they render *I have not taken the deſire of any one of them*, inſtead of *one*

*aſs*

[f] Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. ſ. 3.

*aſs from them*; neither of which ſeem to ariſe from a bad copy before them, but from ſome other cauſe. The firſt of them is not peculiar to the *Septuagint*, it is the ſame in the *Samaritan Pentateuch*; and the latter plainly ariſes from the ſimilarity of the letters *Daleth* and *Reſh*. There is a third, *Exod.* xii. 40. in which there is ſome agreement, but not exact. Beſides, neither *Philo* the *Jew*, nor *Joſephus*, though they wrote very particularly of this affair of *Ptolemy*, yet make not the leaſt mention of theſe alterations, in the copy ſent to him, nor in the tranſlation of it. They obſerve, there never was any change made in the ſacred writings, from the time of the writing of them to the age in which they lived. *Philo* ſays[s], the *Jews*, "for the ſpace of more than two "thouſand years, never changed one "word of what was written by *Moſes*, "but would rather die a thouſand "times,

[s] Apud Euſeb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 8. c. 6. p. 357.

" times, than receive any thing con-
" trary to his laws and cuſtoms."
*Joſephus* [h] obſerves, " it is plain, in
" fact, what credit we give to our
" writings, for that ſo long a ſpace of
" time has run out, yet no one ever
" dared, neither to add, nor to take
" away, nor to change any thing."
And *Walton* [i] himſelf, I obſerve, reck-
ons this ſtory about the alterations for
the ſake of King *Ptolemy*, to be a
*Rabbinical* fable; and, as ſuch, *Je-
rom* [k] had got a hint of it from one of
his *Rabbins*.

The *Tikkun Sopherim*, or ordination of the ſcribes, is ſuppoſed to be the order of *Ezra*, as it is ſaid in the *Maſorah* on *Exod.* xxxiv. 11. and on *Numb.* xii. 12. and of his colleagues; though ſome think [l] it is no other than the order or inſtruction of the inſpired writers themſelves. It reſpects eighteen paſſages in the Bible, ſo expreſſed,

[h] Contra Apion, l. 1. c. 8. [i] Prolegom. Polyglott. 9. ſ. 16. [k] Præfat. ad Quæſt. Heb. Tom. 3. fol. 65. c. [l] Buxtorf. Epiſt. Glaſſio in Philolog. Sacr. p. 40.

ſed, as that ſome ſmatterers in knowledge might gather from the context, that ſomething elſe is intended than what is written; and ſo ſuſpect a corruption in the text, and take upon them to alter it. Now this ordination of the ſcribes, as it is called, is ſo far from implying a corruption itſelf, and from encouraging an attempt to make an alteration in the text, that it is juſt the reverſe; it is an ordination that the text ſhould be read no otherwiſe than it is; and would have it remarked, that the words ſo read, and which are the words of the inſpired writer, contain an *Euphemy* in them, what is decent and becoming the majeſty of God; when, if they were read, as the context might be thought to require they ſhould be read, they would expreſs what is derogatory to the glory of the Divine Being. Thus, in the firſt of the places, this ordination reſpects, *Gen.* xviii. 22. *Abraham ſtood yet before the Lord*; it might

might ſeem to ſome from the context, that the Lord deſcended to ſtand before *Abraham*; but as this might be thought derogatory to the glory of God, the inſpired writer choſe to expreſs it as he has done,; and the deſign of what is called the ordination of the ſcribes, is to eſtabliſh it, and to admoniſh that none ſhould dare to alter it [m]; and ſo it was to prevent an alteration, and not to make one; they made no change at all, far be it from them, as *Elias Levita* ſays [n]. As for the *Ittur Sopherim*, or ablation of the ſcribes, that is only the removal of a ſuperfluous *Vau* in five places [o]; not that it was in the text, and removed from it by them, but what the common people pronounced in reading, as if it was there; which reading the ſcribes forbid, to ſecure and preſerve the integrity of the text; and which pro-

[m] Halichot Olam, p. 47, 48. Præfat. Ben Chayim ad Bibl. Heb. Buxtorf. fol. 2. Buxtorf. Talmud. Lexic. Col. 2631. [n] In Tiſbi, p. 270. [o] Baal Aruch, in voce עטור Præfat. Ben Chayim ut ſupra. Buxtorf. ut ſupra. Col. 1597, 1598.

prohibition of it to the common people, is called a taking it away; though in reality it never was in the text, only pronounced by the vulgar.

THERE is a paſſage in the *Talmud* [p], produced by ſome [q], as a proof that the *Jews* ſtudiouſly corrupted the ſcriptures, and allowed of it, when an end was to be anſwered by it; which is this, "it is better that one letter be "rooted out of the law, than that the "name of God ſhould be prophaned "openly;" but their ſenſe is not that any letter ſhould be taken, or that it was lawful to take any letter out of any word in the law, to alter the ſenſe of it, in order to ſerve that, or any other purpoſe; but that a leſſer command ſhould give way to a greater: as for inſtance, that the law concerning not putting children to death for the ſins of their parents, and of not ſuffering bodies hanged on a tree to remain

[p] T. Bab. Yevamot, fol. 79. 1. [q] Vid. Morin. de Sincer. Heb. l. 1. Exercitat. 1. c. 2.

remain ſo in the night, ſhould give way to a greater command concerning ſanctifying the name of God publickly; as in the caſe of *Saul*'s ſons being given to the *Gibeonites* to be put to death, and whoſe bodies continued hanging a conſiderable time, which is the caſe under conſideration in the *Talmudic* paſſage referred to; and the ſenſe is, that it was better that the law in *Deut.* xxiv. 16. ſhould be violated, rather than the name of God ſhould be prophaned; which would have been the caſe, if the ſons of *Saul* had not been given up to the *Gibeonites* to be put to death for their father's ſins, becauſe of the oath of *Joſhua* and the princes of *Iſrael* to them. The falſifications charged upon the *Jews* by *Juſtin* and *Origen* reſpect not the *Hebrew* text, but the *Septuagint* verſion; and even, with reſpect to that, *Trypho*, the *Jew*, rejects the charge brought by *Juſtin* as incredible; whether,

ther, ſays he[r], they have detracted from the ſcripture, God knows; it ſeems incredible.

It has been very confidently affirmed, that there is no mention made of the *Hebrew* vowel-points and accents, neither in the *Miſnah* nor in the *Talmud:* and this is ſaid by ſome learned men, who, one would think, were capable of looking into thoſe writings themſelves, and not take things upon truſt, and write after other authors, without ſeeing with their own eyes, and examining for themſelves, whether theſe things be ſo or no; in this they are very culpable, and their miſtakes are quite inexcuſable. But to hear ſome men prate about the *Talmud*, a book, perhaps, which they never ſaw; and about the *Maſorah* and *Maſoretic* notes, one of which, as ſhort as they be, they could never read, is quite intolerable. Theſe men are like ſuch the apoſtle ſpeaks of, on another

[r] Juſtin. Dialog. cum Tryphone, p. 297. 299.

another account, who *understand, neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.* What is this *Masorah*[s]? who are these *Masoretes?* and what have they done, that such an outrageous clamour is raised against them? to me, they seem to be an innocent sort of men; who, if they have done no good, have done no hurt. Did they invent the vowel-points, and add them to the text, against which there is so much wrath and fury vented? to assert this is the height of folly[t]; for if they were the authors of the points, the inventors of the art of pointing, and reduced it to certain rules agreeable to the nature of the language, and were expert in that art, as, no doubt, they were, why did not they point the Bible regularly, and according to the art of pointing at once? why did they



[s] Plane divina res est Hebræorum Critica, quam ipsi Massoram vocant. If. Casaubon. Epist. ep. 390. Porthæsio, p. 467. [t] Punctationem Hebraicam non esse Massora, neque dici, norunt qui nondum ære lavantur. Owen. Theologoumen. par. 4. Digress. 1. p. 293.

leave ſo many anomalies or irregular punctuations? and if, upon a ſurvey of their work, they obſerved the irregularities they had committed, why did not they mend their work, by caſting out the irregular points and putting regular ones in the text itſelf, and not point to them in the margin? or there direct to the true reading? is it uſual for authors to animadvert on their own work in ſuch a manner? if they make miſtakes in their work at firſt, is it uſual in an after edition, and following editions, to continue ſuch miſtakes in the body of the work, and put the corrections of them in the margin? The *Maſoretes*, had they been the inventors of the vowel-points, would never have put them to a word in the text, to which they were not proper, but what better agree with a word placed by them in the margin; had they invented them, they would have put proper ones to the word in the text;

or

or have removed that, and put the word in the margin in its room, with which they agree, ſee *Gen.* viii. 17. and xiv. 3. and it may be obſerved, that their critical art and notes are not only frequently exerciſed and made upon the points, but even upon the points without conſonants, and upon conſonants without points; which would not have become them, had they been the inventors of them; ſee an inſtance of each in *Jer.* xxxi. 38. and li. 3. The truth of the matter, with reſpect to the *Maſoretes*, is, that the pointing of the Bible was not their work; they conſidered it as of a divine original, and therefore dared not to make any alteration in it; but only obſerved, where there was an unuſual punctuation, that it might be taken notice of; and that ſo they found it, and ſo they left it; and that thoſe who came after them might not dare to attempt an alteration. Punctuation was made before their time, as their

work itſelf ſhews; and *Walton*[n], an oppoſer of the antiquity of the points, has this obſervation; "The *Maſore-* "*tic* notes about words irregularly "pointed, and the numbers of them, "neceſſarily ſuppoſe that pointing was "made long before." Have theſe *Maſoretes* employed their time and ſtudy, in counting the verſes and letters of the Bible, and how many verſes and letters there are in ſuch a book; and where exactly is the middle of it; where a word is deficient or lacks a letter; or where it is full and has them all; or where one is redundant and has too many; where one letter is larger and another leſſer than uſual, and another ſuſpended; ſuppoſe now this is all trifling, and of no manner of importance, yet who or what are injured by it? the miſpending of their time in ſuch trifles, is a loſs not to others, but to themſelves; and, as a learned man[w] remarks,

[n] Prolegom. 8. f. 12.

[w] *Chappelow*'s Commentary on *Job* ix. 34. See alſo on ch. xi. 14.

remarks, " how trifling ſoever this " ſcrupulous exactneſs of the *Maſo-* " *retes* (with reſpect to the letters in " the *Hebrew* text) may appear, yet it " ſuggeſts to us one obſervation, that " the *Jews* were religiouſly careful to " preſerve the true literal text of " ſcripture; and conſequently, not- " withſtanding their enmity and ob- " ſtinate averſion to chriſtianity, they " are not to be charged with this ad- " ditional crime of having corrupted " the Bible:" and after all, have not the Chriſtians had their *Maſoretes* alſo[x], who, with like diligence and faithfulneſs, have numbered all the verſes, both of the *Greek* verſion of the Old Teſtament and of the books of the New? and have they been blamed for it? *Jerom*[y] numbered the verſes of the book of *Proverbs*, and ſays they were 915, exactly as the *Maſorah*. Some words, through length



[x] Vid. Croii Obſerv. in Nov. Teſt. c. 1. & c. 10.
[y] Quæſt. ſeu Trad. Heb. lib. Reg. 3. fol. 80. I. Tom. 3.

of time, became obſcene and offenſive to chaſte ears, at leaſt were thought ſo[z]; hence the *Maſoretes* placed other words in the margin, which, perhaps, is the boldeſt thing they ever did, and of which the *Karaite Jews* complain; but then they never attempted to remove the other words from the text, and put in theirs in their room; they only placed them where they did, that, when the paſſages were read in public, or in families, the reader might be ſupplied with words that ſignified the ſame, only more pure and chaſte, and leſs offenſive; at leaſt which were thought ſo; and which were left to their own option to read them or not. The paſſages are *Deut.* xxviii. 27, 30. 1 *Sam.* v. 6. 9. *Iſ.* xiii. 16. *Zech.* xiv. 2. 2 *Kings* vi. 25. x. 27. and xviii. 27. *Iſ.* xxxvi. 12. and it would not be improper, if, in the margin of our Bibles over-againſt the laſt, and others that have the ſame word, another

[z] Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 8.

other *Engliſh* word or words were put to be read leſs offenſive. And, by the way, from the change of words propoſed in thoſe paſſages, may be drawn an argument in favour of the antiquity of the *Maſoretes*. For this part of their work muſt be done, whilſt the *Hebrew* language was a living language, when only the difference of words offenſive or not offenſive to the ear could be diſcerned, and a change of them neceſſary: and certain it is, theſe notes were made before the *Talmud*, for mention is made of them in it[a]: yea, theſe variations are followed by the ancient *Targums*, by *Onkelos*, and the *Jeruſalem* on *Deut.* xxviii. 27. 30. and not only by *Pſeudo-Jonathan* on 1 *Sam.* v. 6. 9. 2 *Kings* vi. 25. x. 27. and xviii. 27. but by the true *Jonathan* on *Iſ.* xiii. 16. and xxxvi. 12. and *Zech.* xiv. 2. who and *Onkelos* are ſuppoſed to live in the firſt century. As for the word *Sebirim*,



[a] T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 25. 2.

ſometimes uſed by the *Maſoretes* in their notes; this only reſpects the conjectures of ſome perſons, who thought a word ſhould be otherwiſe read or pointed; but it is what the *Maſoretes* object to, and ſay of ſuch perſons, that they are miſtaken: and this they obſerve, that no one may preſume to make any alteration upon ſuch conjectures: and are they to be blamed for this? and, beſides theſe things, what have they done, except tranſmitting, from age to age, the marginal or various readings, which had been obſerved by collating copies, or which aroſe from their own obſervations, by comparing different copies that lay before them; and from delivering them down to poſterity, they obtained the name of *Maſoretes*; and can this be thought to be culpable in them? they left the text as they found it; nor did they offer of themſelves to inſert a various reading, different from the commonly received copy, but placed ſuch readings

readings in the margin, that others might make what uſe of them they pleaſed; or rather they took this method, to prevent the inſertion of them into the text, ſuggeſting, that ſo they found them, and there it was proper to continue them: and is a Bible with ſuch readings the worſe for them? is a *Greek* Teſtament to be diſ-eſteemed, for having the various readings in it collected from different copies? or are our *Engliſh* Bibles with the marginal readings in them, placed by the tranſlators themſelves, with references to other ſcriptures, the leſs valuable on that account? nay, are they not the more valued for them? and it may be obſerved, that theſe *Keries* or marginal readings of the *Hebrew* text, are followed in many places, by ſome of the beſt tranſlators of the Bible, both ancient and modern. *Aquila* and *Symmachus*, the beſt of the antient *Greek* interpreters, almoſt always follow them[b].

*Jerom*

[b] Montfaucon. Hexapla Origen. vol. 2. p. 549.

*Jerom* had knowledge of them, and teſtifies to *Aquila*'s following them, in a particular inſtance. His words are [c], "*Aſſeremoth* in *Jer.* (xxxi. 40.) for "which, in a *Hebrew* copy it is writ-"ten *Sedemoth*, which *Aquila* inter-"prets *ſuburbana.*" And which reading is preferred by *Jerom* [d], as is the marginal reading of *v.* 38. And if he was the author of the *Vulgate Latin* verſion, that agrees with the marginal readings of the *Maſoretes* in ſeveral places; ſee *Joſh.* iii. 16. and xv. 47. 2 *Sam.* viii. 3. 2 *Kings* xix. 31. all which ſhew the antiquity of theſe readings. So modern interpreters, *Junius* and *Tremellius*, our own tranſlators, and the *Dutch* [e], often follow them, as do various interpreters, both *Papiſts* and *Proteſtants*. Nay, ſome of theſe readings and notes are confirmed by the inſpired writers of the New Teſtament. Thus, for inſtance, in *Pſ.*

[c] De loc. Heb. fol. 89. B. [d] Comment. in Hieremiam, c. 31. 40. fol. 161. F. [e] Leuſden. Philolog. Heb. Mixt. Diſſert. 10. ſ. 9. p. 84.

*Pſ.* xvi. 10. the word rendered *holy one*, is written with a *yod*, as if it was plural; but the *Maſoretic* note on it is, that the *yod* is redundant, and ſo the word is to be conſidered as of the ſingular number; and this is confirmed by two inſpired writers, the apoſtles *Peter* and *Paul*, *Acts* ii. 27. and xiii. 35. Again, in *Prov.* iii. 34. the *Cetib* or textual writing is, לעניים *the poor*; but the *Keri* or marginal reading לענוים *the humble* or *lowly*, which is followed by our tranſlators of the text, and is confirmed by two apoſtles, *James* and *Peter*, *Jam.* iv. 6. 1 *Pet.* v. 5. And what have the *Maſoretes* done in this reſpect, but what the learned Dr. *Kennicott* is now doing, or getting done in the ſeveral libraries in *Europe*; that is, collating the ſeveral copies, and collecting from them the various readings; and which, if I underſtand his deſign aright, is not to form, upon his own judgment, a new copy of the *Hebrew* text; but to do

do with the preſent copy in common uſe, what others have done with the New Teſtament; let it ſtand as it is, with the various readings thrown into the margin as they may be collected, and leave them to every one's judgement, with ſome critical rules to form it, to make uſe of them as they pleaſe: and when this learned gentleman has finiſhed his large *Maſoretic* work, he will be the greateſt *Maſorete* that ever any age produced; ſince not only eight hundred and forty-eight various readings, as *Elias* [f] has reckoned thoſe of the *Maſoretes* to be, but as many thouſands, and more will now appear. I ſay not this, to depreciate his laborious undertaking, far be it from me; he has my good wiſhes for the finiſhing of it, and what little aſſiſtance otherwiſe I can give him in it. For I am not ſo great an enthuſiaſt, for the integrity of the preſent printed *Hebrew* copy, as to imagine, that it is entirely

[f] Præfat. 3. ad Maſoret.

tirely clear of the miſtakes of tranſcribers in all places: to imagine this, is to ſuppoſe a miraculous interpoſition of Divine Providence attending the copiers of it, and that conſtant and univerſal; and if but one copier was under ſuch an influence, it would be very extraordinary indeed, if his copy ſhould be lighted on at the firſt printing of the *Hebrew* Bible; and beſides the firſt *Hebrew* Bible that was printed, was not printed from one copy, but from various copies collated; nor is there more reaſon to believe, that the *Hebrew* text of the Old Teſtament, which is more antient, ſhould be preſerved from the eſcapes of librarians, than the *Greek* of the New Teſtament, which it is too notorious are many: nor is ſuffering ſuch eſcapes any contradiction to the Promiſe and Providence of God, reſpecting the preſervation of the Sacred Writings, ſince all of any moment is preſerved in the ſeveral copies; ſo that what is omitted, or

or ſtands wrong in one copy, may be ſupplied and ſet right by another, which is a ſufficient vindication of Divine Providence; and this may ſerve to excite the diligence and induſtry of learned men, in collating the ſeveral copies for ſuch a purpoſe; and beſides, the Providence of God remarkably appears, in that the eſcapes ſuffered to be made do not affect any doctrine of *faith*, or any moral *practice*, as has been obſerved and owned by many [g]: and after all, if from the preſent collation of manuſcripts, there ſhould be publiſhed, what may be thought a more correct and perfect copy of the *Hebrew* text, we ſhall be beholden to the *Jews* for it, againſt whom the clamour riſes ſo high: for by whom were the manuſcripts written, now collating, but by *Jews?* for the truth

[g] Amamæ Antibarb. Bibl. l. 1. p. 20. 22. Bochart. Phaleg, l. 2. c. 13. col. 91, 92. Walton. Prolegom. 6. ſ. 1. 3. and 7. ſ. 12. 15 and Conſiderator conſidered, p. 127. 162. Capellus de Critica. Epiſt ad Uſſer. p. 116. Dr. Kennicott, Diſſert. 1. p. 11. 301.

truth of this, I appeal to the learned collator himſelf; and who, if I miſtake not, in his printed Diſſertations always repreſents the ſeveral *Hebrew* copies, whether more or leſs perfect, as the work of *Jewiſh* tranſcribers; and indeed the thing ſpeaks for itſelf: for from the times of *Jerom* to the age of printing, there were ſcarce any, if any at all among Chriſtians, capable of tranſcribing an *Hebrew* copy; that interval was a time of barbarous ignorance, as with reſpect to arts and ſciences, ſo with reſpect to languages, eſpecially the *Hebrew*. To know a little *Greek*, in thoſe barbarous times, was enough to make a man ſuſpected of hereſy; and to ſtudy *Hebrew*, was almoſt ſufficient to proclaim him an heretic at once: the ſtudy of which lay much neglected, until it was revived by *Reuchlin* and others, a little before, and about the time of the Reformation. There might, in the above ſpace of time, riſe up now and then one,

one, who had ſome knowledge of the *Hebrew* tongue, as *Raymund* in the thirteenth century, the author of *Pugio Fidei*; and friar *Bacon*, who wrote an *Hebrew* grammar in the latter end of the ſame century, and which perhaps was the firſt, at leaſt one of the firſt *Hebrew* grammars written by a Chriſtian; though ſince, we have had a multitude of them: for almoſt every ſmatterer in the *Hebrew* language thinks himſelf qualified to write a grammar of it. However, there is no reaſon to believe, as I can underſtand, that any of our *Hebrew* manuſcripts were written by Chriſtians, but all by *Jews*, I mean ſuch as were written before the age of printing; for what have been written ſince, can be of no account.

I OBSERVE there is much talk about the *Maſoretic* Bible, and about *Maſoretic* authority. As to the *Maſoretic* Bible, I could never learn there ever was ſuch an one, either in manuſcript, or

or in print, that could with any propriety be ſo called. Is a Bible with points to be called *Maſoretic?* it muſt be with great impropriety, ſince the *Maſoretes*, as has been obſerved, were not the authors of pointing: are any called ſo, becauſe they have various readings, and other notes in the margin? as well may a *Greek* Teſtament, with various readings and notes in the margin have ſuch a name. Let it be ſhewn, if it can, that there ever was in manuſcript, or in print, a copy of the *Hebrew* text, in all things conformable to the *Maſoretic* notes and readings in the margin, or in which theſe are inſerted in the body of the text, call them corrections, emendations, various readings, or what you pleaſe; but if theſe cannot be ſhewn, then whatſoever Bible, that does not conform in the text to the *Maſorah* in the margin, with much greater propriety may be called *Anti-maſoretic* than *Maſoretic*. As to authority, the

*Maſoretes* never claimed any; their *Keri* is no command to read ſo or ſo, nor even a direction how to read, and much leſs a correction of the text, as if it was faulty; it is only a ſuggeſtion, that ſo it is read in ſome copies; for the word for which ק ſtands in the margin of ſome Bibles, is not the imperative קְרִי *Kere* read, but is קְרִי; and is either the ſame with קְרוּי ſomething read, or with קְרִיָה a reading, *i. e.* a various reading. And if the *Maſoretes* ever pretended to any authority, as they have not, it is not regarded; for notwithſtanding their antiquity, their readings, and what is agreeable to their notes and obſervations, are not admitted into the text, but are obliged to keep their place in the margin; and where then is their authority? thus, for inſtance, in defiance of *Maſoretic* authority, as it is called, and notwithſtanding the *Maſoretic* note in the margin, the ſecond *yod* is continued in חֲסִידָי *Pſ.* xvi. 10. and in defiance

of the punctuation of the word, which is different from all other places, where the word is manifeſtly plural, as in *Pſ.* lii. 9. lxxix. 2. cxxxii. 9. and cxlv. 10. 2 *Chron.* vi. 41. in all which places *Segol* is put under *Daleth*; but here *Sheva*, as it is in other words, in which the *yod* is redundant alſo, and the word to be read ſingular, as *Debareca*, 1 *Kings* viii. 26. and xviii. 36. *Dameca*, 2 *Sam.* i. 16. *Yadeca*, 1 *Kings* xxii. 34. *Prov.* iii. 27. *Abdeca*, 1 *Kings* i. 27. *Ragleca*, *Eccl.* v. 1. with others: and in defiance of the *Talmud* alſo. There are but two places [h] I have met with in the *Talmud*, where the text is quoted; and in both of them the word is without the *yod*; ſo that if theſe, eſpecially the firſt, had any authority, the *yod* would not continue in that word.

The different ſchemes men have formed, for reading *Hebrew* without the antient points, ſhew the neceſſity



[h] T. Bab. Eruvin, fol. 19. 1. et Yoma, fol. 87. 1.

of them, and the puzzle they are at without them; but what need men rack their brains to find out a ſcheme of reading that language, when there is one ſo ſuitable, ready at hand for them, conſiſting of vowel-points, which for their figure and poſition cannot be equalled by any; which are ſo contrived, that they take up ſcarce any, or very little more room, than the words do without them; which neither increaſe the number of letters in a word, nor make it longer, nor give it any unſightly appearance? whereas, for inſtance, *Maſclef*'s ſcheme, beſides the augmentation of letters, makes the word look very aukward: and if it was thought the preſent vowel-points were too numerous, and too great an incumbrance to words, one would think, men might content themſelves with reducing their number, and not throw them all away: but the great offence taken at them is, that they tie down to a certain determinate ſenſe of

the word, and that they cannot bear, but chuſe to be at liberty to fix what ſenſe upon it they pleaſe.

GREAT complaint is made of the ignorance of the *Maſoretes* in pointing; and an inſtance is given of it, in their pointing the word *Cyrus*, as to be read *Coreſh* or *Choreſh*, though indeed they had no hand in it; but admitting they had, and whoever had, there does not appear to be any juſt blame for it. It is true, it may be thought ſo, if the *Greek* pronunciation of the word muſt be the rule of punctuation: but the original name is not *Greek*, but *Perſic*; and which, in that language, ſignifies the ſun. So *Cteſias* [i] and *Plutarch* [k] ſay: whether *Cyrus* had his name from the ſun being ſeen at his feet, while ſleeping, which he three times endeavoured to catch with his hands, but it ſlipt from him; and which, according to the *Magi*,

[i] In Perſicis ad Calcem Herodot. Ed. Gronov. p. 687.
[k] In Artaxerxe, p. 1012.

*gi*, portended a reign of thirty years[l], is not certain: now the word for the ſun, in the *Perſic* language, is *Chor* or *Cor*, the ſame with *Or*, *Job* xxxi. 26. and it is now called *Corſhad*[m]: hence, the god of the *Perſians* is called *Oromazes*, and ſometimes *Oromaſdes*[n], *Hormuſd*, and *Ormuſd*; this ſhews the propriety of the firſt point put to the word, a *Cholem* and not a *Shurek*; and it may be obſerved, there is a ſimilar word uſed for the ſun in other eaſtern languages, and is pronounced *Cheres*, *Job* ix. 6. to which may be added, that the oriental verſions, both *Syriac* and *Arabic*, read the word for *Cyrus* in all places in the Bible, with *o*, *e*, and *Shin*, according to the Bible-pronunciation. It was uſual with the *Perſians*, to give men names taken from the ſun, as *Carſhena*, *Eſth.* i. 14. and *Orſines* in *Curtius*[o]: as for the

[l] Cicero de divinatione, l. 1. Vid. Hiller. Onomaſtic. ſacr. p. 615. 617. [m] Vid. Bochart. Phaleg. l. 1. c. 15. col. 61. [n] Plutarch. ut ſupra, p. 1026. et in Vita Alexandri, p. 682. [o] Hiſt. l. 10. c. 1.

the *Greek* pronunciation of the word, it is not unuſual with the *Greeks* to pronounce a *Cholem* by an *Ypſilon*, as *Tzor*, *Lod*, *Beerot*, by *Tyrus*, *Lydda*, *Berytus*. In like manner may the punctuation of *Darius* be vindicated, which is *Darjaveſch*, *Dan.* v. 31. in much agreement with which, this name is Δαρειαιος *Dareiaios* with *Cteſias* [p], and is a word conſiſting of four parts, and ſignifies a great, vaſt, vehement fire [q]; and *Eſch*, fire, is well known to be the deity of the *Perſians*, which was taken into the names of their kings and great perſonages, as was uſual in the eaſtern nations. So *Vaſthi*, the wife of *Ahaſuerus*, or *Va-eſhti*, a great fire, *Eſth.* i. 9. *Zereſh*, or *Zehar-eſh*, the wife of *Haman*, ch. v. 10. the brightneſs of fire; and it appears in *Aſtyages*, a king of the *Medes*. *Strabo* ſays [r], ſome people called *Darius*, *Darieces*. *Caſaubon* [s] thinks,

[p] In Perſicis, ut ſupra, p. 641. 643. [q] Hiller. ut ſupra, p. 635. [r] Geograph. l. 16. p. 540. [s] Comment. in ib. p. 217.

thinks, that *Strabo* wrote Δαριαϑης, *Dariaoues*, which is near the *Hebrew* punctuation.

I HAVE ſent the following Diſſertation into the world, not to revive the controverſy about the things treated on in it, nor with any expectation of putting an end to it; no doubt, but ſome will be nibbling at it: and tho' I may be very unfit to engage further in this controverſy, through weight of years upon me, and through the duties of my office, and other work upon my hands, ſome third perſon may perhaps ariſe, to defend what may be thought defenſible in it. Should any truly learned gentleman do me the honour, to animadvert upon what I have written, I am ſure of being treated with candour and decency; but ſhould I be attacked by ſcioliſts, I expect nothing but petulance, ſupercilious airs, ſilly ſneers and opprobrious language; and who will be righteouſly treated with neglect and contempt.

To

To conclude; if what I have written ſhould merit the attention of men of learning, and cauſe them to think again, though ever ſo little; and be a means of directing ſuch, who are enquiring after theſe things; and of engaging ſuch who may hereafter write on theſe ſubjects, to think more cloſely, to write with more care, caution and candour, and with leſs virulence, haughtineſs and arrogance, than have appeared in ſome writings of late upon them, my end will be in a great meaſure anſwered.

A

*ERRATA.*

Page 23. l. 23. for *Eber*, r. *Elam* his firſt-born. P. 62. l. 11. r. through the near likeneſs. P. 65. l. 3. r. *Gen.* xiv. 14. P. 92. l. 11. r. ſaid. P. 113. l. 14. r. חדרתא. P. 128. l. ult. put a comma inſtead of a full ſtop. P. 155. l. 11. r. *Bameh.* l. 15. r. *If.* liv. 13. P. 244. l. 22. r. מירדי. l. 24. r. מיורדי. P. 266. l. 16. r. לבנה. P. 267. l. 22. for when, r. where.

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A

# DISSERTATION

CONCERNING THE

## *HEBREW* LANGUAGE,

LETTERS, VOWEL-POINTS, and ACCENTS.

## CHAP. I.

### *Of the Antiquity of the* Hebrew *Language.*

ACCORDING to the *Targum* of *Onkelos*, on *Gen.* ii. 7. when GOD breathed into man the breath of life, that became in man רוח ממללא a *ſpeaking ſpirit*, or ſoul; or, as *Jonathan* paraphraſes it, the ſoul in the body of man became a *ſpeaking* ſpirit; that is, man was endued with a natural faculty of ſpeech; ſo that he may be defined as well *ab oratione*, a ſpeaking animal, as *a ratione*,

a reaſonable one; for ſpeech is proper and peculiar to men: when it is ſaid, man is endued, as all men are, with a natural faculty of ſpeaking, it is not to be underſtood, as if he was endued with a faculty of ſpeaking ſome particular language; but with a power and capacity of ſpeaking any language he hears, or is taught; I ſay hears, becauſe unleſs a man has the ſenſe of hearing, he cannot expreſs any articulate ſounds, or words: hence ſuch perſons as are totally deaf from their birth, are always dumb, and can never ſpeak any language. *Adam* firſt heard the LORD GOD ſpeaking, before he uttered a word himſelf, as it ſeems from the ſacred hiſtory. The language *Adam* ſpake, and which, perhaps, he received not the whole inſtantaneouſly, but gradually; in which he improved, as circumſtances, and the neceſſity of things required, and which was continued in his poſterity: this very probably is that which remained to the confuſion of the tongues at *Babel*, and the diſperſion of the people from thence. But of this more hereafter.

SOME

Some have fancied, that if children, as ſoon as born, were brought up in a ſolitary place, where they could not hear any language ſpoken, that at the uſual time children begin to ſpeak, they would ſpeak the firſt and primitive language that was ſpoken in the world. *Pſammitichus*, king of *Egypt*, made trial of this by putting two children, newly born, under the care of a ſhepherd; charging him, that not a word ſhould be uttered in their preſence; and that they ſhould be brought up in a cottage by themſelves; and that goats ſhould be had to them at proper times to ſuckle them; and commanded him to obſerve the firſt word ſpoken by them, when they left off their inarticulate ſounds. Accordingly, at two years end, the ſhepherd opening the door of the cottage, both the children with their hands ſtretched out cried *bec*, *bec*. This he took no notice of at firſt, but it being frequently repeated, he told his lord of it, who ordered the children to be brought to him; and when *Pſammitichus* heard them pronounce the word, he enquired what people uſed it, and upon enquiry found that the *Phrygians*

called bread by that name; upon this it was allowed that the *Phrygians* were a more ancient people than the *Egyptians*, between whom there had been a long conteſt about antiquity. This is the account given by *Herodotus* [a]; but the *Scholiaſt* of *Ariſtophanes* [b] ſays, that it was at three year's end the king ordered a man to go in ſilently to them, when he heard them pronounce the above word. And ſo *Suidas* [c] relates, that at the ſame term of time, the king ordered one of his friends to go in ſilently, who heard and reported the ſame; and all of them obſerve, that the ſtory is differently related by others; as that the children were delivered to a nurſe or nurſes, who had their tongues cut out, that they might not ſpeak before them; and ſo ſays *Tertullian* [d]: yet they all agree in the word ſpoken by the children. But, as *Suidas* obſerves, if the former account is true, as it ſeems moſt probable, that they were nouriſhed by goats, and not women; it is no wonder, that often hearing the bleating of the goats, *be-ec*, *be-ec*, they ſhould imitate

[a] Euterpe ſive, l. 2. c. 2, 3. [b] In Nubes, p. 150. [c] Voce Βεκκος τελμης. [d] Ad Nationes, l. 1. c. 8.

imitate the ſound, and ſay after them *bec*, which in the *Phrygian* language ſignified *bread*; and ſo food is expreſſed in *Hebrew* by a word of a ſimilar ſound בג *beg*, *Ezek.* xxv. 7. *Dan.* i. 8. and xi. 26. and might as well be urged in favour of the antiquity of that language; but this proves nothing.

It may ſeem needleſs to enquire what was the firſt language that was ſpoken, and indeed it muſt be ſo, if what ſome ſay is true, that it is not now in being, but was blended with other languages, and loſt in the confuſion at *Babel*; and alſo if the *Oriental* languages, the *Hebrew*, *Samaritan*, *Chaldee*, *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic*, are but one language; which is more probable, as *Ravius* [e] thinks, and ſo may go under the general name of the *Eaſtern* language; and it muſt be acknowledged there is a very great ſimilarity between them, as not only appears from *Ravius*, but from the *Pentaglot* Lexicon of *Schindler*, and eſpecially from the Harmonic Grammars and Lexicons of *Hottinger* and *Caſtell*; and yet I cannot but be of opinion, that the *Hebrew* language ſtands di-

 ſtinguiſhed

[e] A Diſcourſe of the Oriental Tongues, p. 38, 39.

ſtinguiſhed by its ſimplicity and dignity. The celebrated *Albert Schultens*[f] reckons the *Hebrew*, *Chaldee*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* languages, as ſiſter-dialects of the primæval language; which I am content they ſhould be accounted, allowing the *Hebrew* to be the pure dialect, which the others are a deviation from, and not ſo pure: though I ſhould rather chuſe to call them daughters, than ſiſters of the *Hebrew* tongue; ſince, as *Jerom* ſays[g], the *Hebrew* tongue is the mother of all languages, at leaſt of the oriental ones. And theſe daughters are very helpful and aſſiſting to her their mother in her declining ſtate, and now reduced as to purity to the narrow limits of the ſacred ſcriptures; for I cannot prevail upon myſelf to agree that ſhe ſhould be ſtripped of her maternal title, dignity, and honour; ſince ſhe has the beſt claim to be the primitive language, as will be ſeen hereafter. Dr. *Hunt*[h], though he is of the ſame mind with *Schultens*, that the above languages are ſiſters, having

[f] Præfat. ad Comment. in Job. & in Prov. & Orat. de Ling. Arab. Franeker. 1729 & altera Lugd. Batav. 1732. [g] Comment. in Soph. c. 3. fol. 100. A. [h] Orat. de Antiqu. &c. Ling. Arabic. p. 3. 49. 53. Oxon. 1738. & Orat. de uſu Dialect. Orient. p. 2. Oxon. 1748.

having the ſame parent, the *Eaſtern* language, yet ſeems to allow the *Hebrew* to be the elder ſiſter. And *Schultens*[i] himſelf aſſerts, that the primæval language, which was from the beginning of the world ſpoken by our firſt parents, and the antediluvian patriarchs, and after the flood to the diſperſion, is the ſame which was afterwards called *Hebrew*, from *Heber*; from whom it paſſed through *Peleg* and *Abraham* to the nation of the *Hebrews*, and ſo the mother-language; but how it could be both mother and ſiſter, is not eaſy to ſay.

THAT there was but one language ſpoken by men, from *Adam* to the flood in the times of *Noah*, and from thence to the confuſion and diſperſion at *Babel*, ſeems manifeſt from *Gen.* xi. 1. *and the whole earth was of one language, and of one ſpeech*; and which is confirmed by the teſtimonies of ſeveral heathen writers, as by *Sibylla* in *Joſephus*[k], by *Abydenus*[l], and others; and which continued in that interval without any, or little variation: the longevity of the patriarchs

[i] Vid. Orationes ſupradictas, p. 6, 41. [k] Antiqu. l. 1. c. 4. §. 3. [l] Apud Euſeb. Evangel. Præpar. l. 9. c. 14. p. 416.

patriarchs much contributed to this, for *Adam* himſelf lived to the 10th century, and the flood was in the 17th. *Methuſelah*, who died a little before the flood, lived upwards of two hundred years in the days of *Adam*, and 600 years cotemporary with *Noah*, and who doubtleſs ſpoke the ſame language that *Adam* did; yea *Lamech*, the father of *Noah*, was born 50 years or more before the death of *Adam*; ſo that the language of *Adam* to the days of *Noah* is eaſily accounted for as the ſame: if any variation, it muſt be in the offspring of thoſe of the patriarchs who removed from them, and ſettled in different parts of the world, but of this there is no proof; the ſeparation of *Cain* and his poſterity on account of religion, does not appear to have produced any alteration in language; but the ſame language was ſpoken by one as another, as is evident by the names of perſons in the line of *Cain*, and of places inhabited by them to the time of the flood; when, no doubt, the ſame language was ſpoken by *Noah*, from whom his ſons received it, and was continued unto the diſperſion, which before that was but one; and it is

the opinion of the *Perſian* prieſts or *Magi*, that the time will come when the earth will be of one language again §; and if ſo, it is probable it will be the primitive one, but what that was, is the thing to be enquired into. The *Targums* of *Jonathan* and *Onkelos* on the place, add, by way of explanation, "and they ſpoke in the holy tongue, "in which the world was created at the "beginning," meaning the *Hebrew* language, uſually called the holy tongue; and this is the ſenſe of *Jarchi*, *Aben Ezra*, and the Jewiſh writers in general, and of many Chriſtians. But moſt nations have put in a claim for the ſuperior antiquity of their nation and language, the *Europeans* not excepted. *Goropius Becanus* pleaded for the *Teutonic* language, or that which is ſpoken in lower *Germany* and *Brabant*, to be the original one, and attempted to derive the *Hebrew* from it; but it has been thought he was not ſerious in it, only did it to ſhew his *acumen*, and the luxuriancy of his fancy and imagination; the eaſtern nations have a much better pretext to antiquity, and moſt, if not all of them, have put

§ Plutarch. de Iſide & Oſir. p. 370.

put in their claim for it. There was a long conteſt between the *Egyptians* and *Phrygians* about this matter, as before obſerved. The *Armenians* have urged in their favour, that the ark reſted on one of the mountains in their country, where *Noah* and his poſterity continued ſome time, and left their language there. The *Arabs* pretend, that their language was ſpoken by *Adam* before his fall, and then changed into *Syriac*, and was reſtored upon his repentance, but again degenerated, and was in danger of being loſt, but was preſerved by the elder *Jorham*, who eſcaped with *Noah* in the ark, and propagated it among his poſterity. The *Chineſe* make great pretenſions to the primitive language, and many things are urged in their favour, as the antiquity of their nation, their early acquaintance with arts and ſciences, the ſingularity, ſimplicity, and modeſty of their tongue[k]. A countryman of ours, in the laſt century, publiſhed a treatiſe, called "An hiſtorical eſſay, endeavouring a probability that the language of *China* is the primitive language, by *J. Webb*, Eſq; *London*, 1669, 8vo."

[k] See the Univerſal Hiſtory, Vol. 1. p. 346, 347.

8vo." But as when many candidates put up for a place, they are generally reduced to a few, and, if poſſible to two; the ſame method muſt be taken here; for the conteſt lies between the *Syriac* or *Chaldee*, and the *Hebrew*.

The *Chaldee* or *Syriac* language has its patrons for the antiquity of it; not only *Theodoret*, who was by birth a *Syrian*, and *Amyra* the *Maronite*, who are not to be wondered at, and others who have made it their favourite ſtudy; but even the *Arabic* writers, the more judicious of them, give it not only the preference to their own language in point of antiquity, but even make it as early as *Adam*. *Elmacinus* ſays[l], there are hiſtorians (*Arabic* ones) who affirm, that *Adam* and his poſterity ſpoke the *Syriac* language until the confuſion of tongues; and ſo *Abulpharagius* ſays[m], "of our doctors, *Baſilius* and *Ephraim* aſſert, that unto *Eber* the language of men was one, and that that was *Syriac*, and in which God ſpoke to *Adam*;" and it muſt be allowed, that there are many things plauſibly ſaid

[l] Apud Hottinger. Smegma l. 1. c. 8. p. 228. [m] Hiſt. Dynaſt. Dyn. 1. p. 16.

ſaid in favour of this language being primitive: it muſt be owned that the *Chaldean* nation was a very antient one, *Jen.* v. 15. and that the *Syriac* language was ſpoken very early, as by *Laban*; but not earlier than the *Hebrew*, which was ſpoken at the ſame time by *Jacob*; the one called the heap of ſtones which was a witneſs between them *Jegar-ſahadutha* in the *Syro-Chaldean* language, and the other *Galeed* in *Hebrew*, which both ſignify the ſame thing: what is commonly urged is as follows:

1. THAT the names of a man and woman are as much alike, if not more ſo, in the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* language, as in the *Hebrew*; a man is called *Gabra* and a woman *Gabretha*, which is equally as near as *Iſh* and *Iſhah* produced to prove the antiquity of the *Hebrew*, *Gen.* ii. 23. But neither in the *Chaldee* of *Onkelos*, nor in the *Syriac* verſion of that place, is it *Gabretha*, but *Ittetha* in the one, and *Antetha* in the other. *Theodoret* [a] inſtances in the names *Adam*, *Cain*, *Abel*, *Noah*, as proper to the *Syriac* language; but the derivation

[a] In Gen. quæſt. 59.

rivation of them from the *Hebrew* tongue is more clear and manifeſt.

2. THAT it is rather agreeable to truth, that the primæval and common language before the confuſion ſhould remain in the country where the tower was built and the confuſion made, which was in *Chaldea*, and therefore the *Chaldee* language, muſt be that language[o]; but rather the contrary ſeems more natural, that the language, confounded and corrupted, ſhould continue in the place where the confuſion was made, and that thoſe poſſeſſed of the pure and primitive language ſhould depart from thence, as in fact they afterwards did.

3. IT is obſerved[p], that both *Eber* and *Abraham* were originally *Chaldeans*, and were brought up in *Chaldea*, and ſo muſt ſpeak the language of that country, which therefore muſt be prior to the *Hebrew*; but it ſhould be conſidered, that not only *Eber* but *Abraham* lived before the confuſion and diſperſion; for if the confuſion was in the latter end of *Peleg*'s days[q], *Abraham*,

[o] Myricæi Præfat. ad Gram. Syro-Chald. [p] Ibid.
[q] So R. Joſe in Seder Olam Rabba c. 1. p. 1. Abarbinel in Pentateuch. fol. 51, 3. Juchaſin, fol. 8. 1. Shalſhalet Hakabala, fol. 1. 2.

*braham*, according to the *Jewiſh* chronology, muſt be 48 years of age †, and conſequently poſſeſſed of the pure and primitive language, be it what it may; and ſince it does not appear that either he or any of his poſterity, as *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, uſed the *Chaldee* language, but the *Hebrew* only, it ſeems to follow, that not the *Chaldee*, but the *Hebrew*, muſt be the language ſpoken by him, and ſo the primitive one.

4. It is ſaid [r], the *Hebrews* ſprung from the *Chaldeans*, *Judith* v. 5. and ſo their language muſt be later than theirs; this is founded on *Abraham*'s being of *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, from whence he came; but it does not follow, that becauſe he was born and lived in that country before the confuſion of *Babel*, that therefore he ſpoke the language uſed in that country afterwards, ſince he was ſoon called out of it; and it appears that he ſpoke not the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* language, but the *Hebrew*, as before obſerved.

5. It is urged [s], as highly probable, that the language the ſecond *Adam* ſpake, the firſt

† Seder Olam, ib. [r] Myricæus, ut ſupra. [s] Ibid.

firſt *Adam* did; now Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and the people of the *Jews* in their times, ſpoke in the *Syriac* language, as appears from *Matt.* xxvii. 46. *Mark* v. 41. and vii. 34. but according to ſome learned men, as *Maſius*[t], and *Fabricius Boderianus*[v], this was not the ancient language of the *Syrians* and *Chaldeans*, but a new language, which had its firſt riſe in the *Babyloniſh* captivity, and was a mixture of *Chaldee* and *Hebrew*; tho' rather the mixture began in the times of the *Seleucidæ*, the *Syrian* kings, who entered into and diſtreſſed *Judea*; and therefore no argument can be taken from it in favour of the *Syriac* being the primitive language. I proceed now to propoſe the arguments that are, or may be uſed in favour of the *Hebrew* language being the primitive one; and the

*Firſt*, may be taken from the alphabet of the tongue itſelf, which appears to be the firſt alphabet of all the eaſtern languages. The *Chaldee* or *Syriac*, *Phœnician* or *Samaritan*, have their alphabets manifeſtly from it; the names, the number, and order of their letters, and even the form and ducts of them

[t] Præfat. ad Gram. Syr. [v] Præfat. ad Diction. Syro-Chald.

them ſeem to be taken from thence, and to be corrupt deviations from it; and the *Arabic* language, tho' the order of its alphabet is ſomewhat diſturbed, yet the names of moſt of the letters are plainly from the *Hebrew*; and ſo indeed is the greater part of the names of letters in the *Greek* alphabet, from whence the *Romans* have taken theirs, and other *European* nations. *Hermannus Hugo*[u] obſerves, that it is agreed among all, that from the names of the *Hebrew* characters, the letters of all nations have their names; now that language, whoſe alphabet appears to be the firſt, and to give riſe to the alphabets of other tongues, bids faireſt to be the firſt and primitive language: let it be obſerved that the *Hebrew* alphabet, as it now is, is exactly the ſame as it was in the days of *David* and *Solomon*, ſo early it can be traced; for it is to be ſeen in the 119th *Pſalm*, and in others, and in the laſt chapter of the book of *Proverbs*, as well as in the book of *Lamentations*, written before or at the beginning of the *Babyloniſh* captivity.

*Secondly*,

[u] De prima ſcribendi orig. c. 7. p. 65.

*Secondly*, Another argument for the antiquity of the *Hebrew* language, may be formed from the perfection and purity of it. *Abraham de Balmis* [w] ſays of it, that "it is perfect in its letters and in its points. "Our language, ſays he, is the moſt perfect language, and in its writing the moſt "perfect of all writings of all languages; "there is nothing wanting, and there is "nothing redundant in it, according to the "laws and rules of things perfect and compleat." It conſiſts of words which moſt fully and effectually expreſs the nature of the things ſignified by 'em; its roots, which are of a certain number, are, for the moſt part, of three letters only, and it has no exotic or ſtrange words uſed in it. Whoever compares it with the *Syriac* or *Chaldee*, will eaſily perceive the difference as to the purity of 'em, and that the *Chaldee* is derived from the *Hebrew*, and is later than that; for as *Scaliger* long ago obſerved [x] מלך *Melech* muſt be before מלכא *Malca*, the latter being derived from the former; and the ſame may be obſerved in a multitude of other inſtances: now that

C which

[w] Mikneh Abraham, p. 39. lin. 13, 14, 15. [x] Epiſt. ad Thompſon. Ep. 242.

which is perfect, pure, and underived, muſt be before that which is imperfect, corrupt, and derived; or, as the philoſopher[y] expreſſes it, that which is vicious and corrupt muſt be later than that which is incorrupt.

*Thirdly*, The *Paronomaſia* which *Adam* uſed when he called his wife *woman*, may be thought to be a good proof of the antiquity of the *Hebrew* language; ſince it will agree with that language only, *ſhe ſhall be called Iſhah, woman, becauſe ſhe was* taken, *meiſh, out of man*, *Gen.* ii. 23. which *paronomaſia* does not appear neither in the *Syriac* verſion, nor in the *Chaldee* paraphraſes of *Onkelos* and *Jonathan*, in which tho' *Gabra* is uſed of a man, yet never *Gabretha* of a woman, not even in places where men and women are ſpoken of together; ſee the *Syriac* verſion and *Chaldee* paraphraſe of *Exod.* xxxv. 22. *Deut.* ii. 34. and many other places; and the reaſon for it is plain, the word is expreſſive of power and might, and ſo not ſo proper to be uſed of the weaker ſex. The *Syriac* or *Chaldee* language will not admit of ſuch an alluſion as

[y] Ariſtot. de Republica, l. 3. c. 1.

as is in the text; for on the one hand, as *Gabra* is uſed for a man, and not *Gabretha* for a woman, ſo on the other hand, *Itta*, *Ittetha*, and *Intetha* or *Antetha*, are uſed for a woman, but never *Itt* for a man. Now as we prove that the additions to the book of *Daniel* were written in *Greek*, from the *paronomaſia* in ch. xiii. 55. 59. ſo this ſeems to prove that the language *Adam* ſpoke in to his wife muſt be the *Hebrew* language, and conſequently is the primitive one.[z]

*Fourthly*, The names of perſons and places before the confuſion at *Babel*, are in the *Hebrew* language, and are plainly derived from words in it; as *Adam* from אדמה *Adamah*, earth, out of which he was formed, as is generally thought. *Eve*, from חיה *Chayah*, to live, becauſe the mother of all living; *Cain* from קנה to get, obtain, poſſeſs, being gotten from the Lord; *Abel*, from הבל *Hebel*, vanity, as his life was; and *Seth*, from שת *Sheth*, put, appointed, becauſe put, ſet, or appointed another ſeed in the room of *Abel*[a]: and ſo all the names of the *Antediluvian* patri-

 archs

[z] Vid. Bereſhit Rabba ſ. 18. fol. 15. 2. [a] Vid. Sepher Coſri, par. 1. c. 68.

archs down to *Noah* and his ſons, and their names alſo, with all thoſe before the confuſion and diſperſion at *Babel*; and likewiſe the names of places, as of the garden of *Eden*, from עד delight, pleaſure, it being a very pleaſant place; and the land of *Nod* from נוד to wander about; *Cain* being an exile and wanderer in it: now theſe being the names of perſons and places before the confuſion of tongues, clearly ſhew what language was ſpoken before that time, namely, the *Hebrew*, which therefore ſeems to be the primitive one.

*Fifthly*, It is notorious that the law and the prophets, or the books of the old teſtament, were written in the *Hebrew* tongue. The law was written in it on two tables of ſtone by the finger of God himſelf, and the ſacred books were written in the ſame language, under divine inſpiration. Now it is reaſonable to conclude, that the ſame language God wrote and inſpired the prophets to write in, he himſelf ſpoke in to *Adam*, and inſpired him with it, or however gave him a faculty of ſpeaking it, and which he did ſpeak, and therefore may be concluded to be the firſt and primitive tongue.

It now remains only to be enquired into, why this language is called *Hebrew*. It is ſuppoſed by ſome to have its name from *Eber*, the father of *Peleg*, in whoſe days the earth was divided, and from whom the *Hebrews* ſprung and have their name [b]; and which opinion has been moſt generally received. Others think it has its name from עבר *Abar*, to paſs over, from *Abraham*'s paſſing over the river *Euphrates* into the land of *Canaan*; this notion *Aben Ezra* makes mention of on *Exod.* xxi. 2. and has been eſpouſed by *Theodoret* [c] among the ancients, and indeed according to *Origen* † the word *Hebrew* ſignifies *paſſer over*, and ſo *Jerom*; and by *Scaliger* [d] and *Arias Montanus* [e] among the moderns, in which they have been followed by many. The matter is not of very great conſequence, but I muſt confeſs I am moſt inclined to the former; for as *Auſtin* [f] obſerves, before the confuſion language was one, and common to all, and needed no name to diſtinguiſh it; it was enough to call it the ſpeech of man, or the human language; but when there was

[b] Suidas in voce Εβραιοι. [c] Theodoret. in Gen. Qu. 60. † Comment. in Matth. p. 239. Ed. Huet. et in Num. Homil. fol. 19. 129. E. Reuchlin. de verbo mirific. l. 3. c. 13. [d] Epiſt. ad Thompſon. et ad Ubertum. [e] Canaan c. 9. 10. [f] De Civ. Dei, l. 16. c. 11.

was a confuſion of tongues, and ſo more than one, it became neceſſary to diſtinguiſh them by names; and what name morepr oper for the firſt language than that of *Hebrew*, from *Eber*, the laſt man in whoſe days it was alone and common to all? for in his ſon's days the earth was divided into different nations, ſpeaking different languages. Moreover, *Shem* is ſaid to be *the Father of all the children of* Eber, Gen. iv. 21. or as *Jonathan* paraphraſes it, of all the children of the *Hebrews*, or of *Hebrew* children: reſpect is had, as the learned *Rivet*[f] obſerves, to the bleſſing of *Shem*, in oppoſition to the curſe of *Ham*, *Gen.* ix. 25. 26. Now as *Canaan* ſprung from *Ham*, and was the father of the *Canaanites*, ſo *Eber* ſprung from *Shem* and was the father of the *Hebrews*; and as afterwards they were called the children of *Iſrael*, and *Iſraelites* from *Iſrael*, and the children of *Judah* and *Jews* from *Judah*; ſo the children of *Eber* or *Hebrews* from him, and with equal propriety the language they ſpoke may be called *Hebrew* from him; and their country likewiſe, as in *Gen.* xl. 15. for it does not ſeem probable that the land

[f] In Gen. Exercitat. 66. p. 319.

land of *Canaan* ſhould be called the land of the *Hebrews*, as it is there, ſo early as in the youth of *Joſeph*, from a ſingle family being paſſengers, travellers, and ſtrangers in it, which are characters not very reſpectful and honourable, nor diſtinguiſhing; but rather from *Eber*, who, and his immediate offspring, might inhabit it,[s] it being that part aſſigned and divided to 'em at the diviſion of the earth, *Deut.* xxxii. 8. out of which they might be driven by the *Canaanites*, ſee *Gen.* xiii. 7. and xiv. 1, 4. therefore it was an act of juſtice to diſpoſſeſs them and replace the children of *Eber* in it: and this may alſo ſerve to account for the names of places in pure *Hebrew* in old *Canaan*, by which they were called, when *Joſhua* made a conqueſt of it, as well as in the time of *Abraham*, ſince it was the land of *Eber* before it was the land of *Canaan*; if *Melchizedeck* was *Shem*, as the *Jews* in general believe, he was king of a city in it, and *Eber* his firſt born had a right unto it, claim'd by *Chedarlaomer*, a deſcendant of his, who attempted the reſcue of it from the *Canaanites*, who had uſurped a power over it, at leaſt over ſome

[s] See Dr. Lightfoot, vol. ii. p. 327.

ſome part of it; and it is eaſy to obſerve, that in the prophecy of *Balaam*, *Numb.* xxiv. 24. as the *Aſſyrians* are called *Aſhur*, from their original progenitor, ſo the *Hebrews* have the name of *Eber* from him; and ſo the word *Eber* there is rendered *Hebrews* by the *Septuagint* and other tranſlators; and as they, ſo their language, may be called from him. As to what is objected[h], that *Eber* and *Abraham* were *Chaldeans*, and ſpoke the *Chaldee* language, this has been reply'd to already; and whereas it is obſerved, that from the time of *Eber* to *Abraham*, no one is ever called an *Hebrew* from him; it is not to be wondered at, ſince *Eber* lived to the time of *Abraham*, and even to the time of *Jacob*, according to both the Jewiſh and Scripture-chronology.

The foundation of the other opinion, that the *Hebrews* and their language have their name from *Abraham*'s paſſing over the *Euphrates* to the land of *Canaan*, is the *Septuagint* verſion of *Gen.* xiv. 13. which inſtead of *Abraham* the *Hebrew*, reads τω περατη the tranſitor or paſſer over; tho[i]

[h] Erpen. Orat. de Ling Heb. c. 2. p. 4.

[i] Seder Olam Rabba,

tho' perhaps no more is meant by that verſion, than that he was, as *Juvenal*[k] expreſſes it, *natus ad Euphratem*, born near the river *Perat*, for that is its name in *Hebrew*; but whatever may be ſaid for *Abraham*'s being called an *Hebrew* from ſuch a circumſtance, it can ſcarcely be thought that a whole nation ſhould be denominated from ſuch an action of a remote anceſtor, when they themſelves paſſed not over the ſame river; beſides there were multitudes who paſſed over the *Euphrates* beſides *Abraham*, who yet never were ſo called; as *Canaan* and his poſterity muſt paſs over it, when they removed from *Shinar* to the land afterwards called by their name; and indeed *Erpenius*[l] is of opinion that the *Canaanites* were firſt called *Hebrews*, or paſſers over, by the *Chaldeans*, becauſe they paſſed over the river *Jordan* into the country which lay between that and the *Mediterranean* ſea, afterwards called from them the land of *Canaan*; and that *Abraham* had not his name from his paſſage into it, but from his dwelling there, and learning their language; hence his poſterity were called *Hebrews*, and the *Hebrew* language the language

[k] Satyr. 1. v. 104. [l] Ut ſupra.

guage of *Canaan*, *If.* xix. 18. and the ſame writer thinks, that if the *Hebrews* were only thoſe of the family of *Jacob*, they would not have been ſo well known to the *Egyptians* in the time of *Joſeph* as they were: but to all this it may be reply'd, that the *Canaanites* were ever called *Hebrews*, does not appear from any writers, ſacred or prophane; nor is it probable that the pure and primitive language, that is the *Hebrew*, as has been ſhewn, ſhould be left with and continued in the race of *Canaan*; and ſtill more improbable, that *Abraham* ſhould learn it of them, who was poſſeſſed of the firſt and primitive language before the confuſion of tongues, as has been obſerved, and before he came into the land of *Canaan*; beſides he ſeems to be called *Abraham* the *Hebrew*, *Gen.* xiv. 13. to diſtinguiſh him from *Mamre*, *Eſhcol*, and *Aner*, who were *Canaanites*, confederates with him; nor is the *Hebrew* language called the language of *Canaan*, becauſe firſt ſpoken by the *Canaanites*, but becauſe the people of *Iſrael* ſpoke it, who for a long time had inhabited the land[m] which

[m] Vid. Gloſs in T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 109. 2. & Abarbinel. in Iſ. xix. 18.

which bore that name; nor need it ſeem ſtrange, that the name of *Hebrew* ſhould be ſo well known in *Potiphar*'s family, and to the *Egyptians* in *Joſeph*'s time, when he himſelf told them, no doubt, that he was an *Hebrew*, as he told the chief butler, *Gen.* xxxix. 17. and xli. 12. and eſpecially if what has been before obſerved concerning the land of the *Hebrews*, can be eſtabliſhed, *Gen.* xl. 15. as being inhabited by *Eber* and his ſons, before the *Canaanites* poſſeſſed it.

THERE are other etymologies of the name of the *Hebrews* and their language, which ſcarce deſerve any notice; as that they have their name from *Abraham*; ſo *Artapanus*[n], an heathen writer, ſays the *Jews* are called *Hebrews* from *Abraham*, but there are but few that have embraced this notion; others ſay, they are ſo called from *Eberhanaar*, which ſignifies beyond or the *other ſide* of the river, that is, of the *Euphrates*, where *Abraham* and his father *Terah* dwelt, and from whence *Abraham* is ſaid to be taken; but there were many beſides them, even whole nations who dwelt beyond that river, who were never called *Hebrews*, nor

[n] Apud Euſeb. Evangel. Præpar. l. 9. c. 18.

nor can any good reaſon be given, why theſe and their poſterity and their language ſhould be called *Hebrew* from thence, tho' many, both *Jews* and *Chriſtians*, have imbibed this notion*: *Euſebius*†, tho' he thinks the *Hebrews* had their name from *Eber*, yet as the word ſignifies a paſſer over, not from one country to the other, but from the vanity of the things of this preſent world, to the ſtudy of divine things, and in which they reſted not, but paſſed on in ſearch of more recondite knowledge: perhaps, after all, the true original of the name may be taken from the place of *Abraham*'s birth, who is firſt called העברי the *Hebrew*, or rather the *Ibrite*, *Gen.* xiv. 13. the place of his birth was *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, as *Aben Ezra*‖ rightly judges, ſince it is expreſsly ſaid to be the land of his brother *Haran*'s nativity, and therefore moſt probably his alſo; now *Ur* of the *Chaldees* is called עברא ועירא *Ibra Zeira*§ and ſo *Abraham* might have this epithet from the place of his nativity, the *Ibrite*, to diſtinguiſh him, as before obſerved, from the

* Vid. Buxtorf de Ling Heb. Conſervat ſ. 32, 33.
† Evangel. Præpar. l. 9. c 6. p. 520.
‖ Comment. in Gen. xi 28.
§ T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1. & Gloſſ. in Ib.

the *Amorites*, among whom he then dwelt, and whence his poſterity frequently afterwards have the name of עִבְרִים or *Ibrites*, *Gen.* xxxix. 14. 17. and xl. 15. and xliii. 32.

One thing more I would juſt obſerve, that whether the *Hebrews* and their language are ſo called either from *Eber*, the father of *Peleg*, or from *Abar*, to paſs over, or from *Eber*, beyond, or the other ſide of the river, or from *Ibra* the native place of *Abraham*; tho' cuſtom has prevailed to write the word with an aſpiration, *Hebrew* and *Hebrews*, it ſhould be written without one, *Ebrew* and *Ebrews*, as words beginning with ע uſually are, as *Amminadib*, *Immanuel*, &c.

CHAP.

## CHAP. II.

### *Concerning the Antiquity of the* Hebrew *Letters.*

IT has been a controverſy among learned men, for a century or two paſt, whether the modern letters uſed by the *Jews*, and in which their ſacred books are now extant, are the ſame in which the law and the prophets were originally written. This is denied by ſome, and it has been affirmed, that the original letters of the *Hebrews*, and in which the books of the Old Teſtament before the times of *Ezra* were written, were what are called *Samaritan*; and that *Ezra*, after the return of the *Jews* from the captivity in *Babylon*, changed theſe letters for the *Merubbah*, or ſquare ones ſince in uſe; and in them wrote all the ſacred books then in being, and gave the antient letters to the *Samaritans*; and this notion has been embraced upon the teſtimonies of *Euſebius* and *Jerom*; the foundation of which appears to be a tradition of the *Jews*, and that far from being generally received by them. The former of theſe in his chro-

chronicle at A. M. 4740, writes, that " it " is affirmed, that *Ezra*, by the ſtrength " of his memory, compiled or put together " the divine ſcriptures, and that they (the " *Jews*) might not be mixed with the *Sa-* " *maritans*, changed the *Jewiſh* letters:" now this paſſage of *Euſebius*, as *Marckius*[r] obſerves, is not to be found in *Scaliger*'s editions of his chronicle, neither in the original *Greek*, nor in the *Latin* verſion; and the illuſtrious *Spanheim*[s] has fully proved, that it is ſpurious, and added to the text by ſome modern hand; and admitting it to be genuine, it ſmells rank of a *Jewiſh* tale, particularly that *Ezra* compiled the ſcriptures *memoriter*; and it is no difficult thing to account for it, from whence *Euſebius* had it, if he had it at all; for ſince he was biſhop of *Cæſarea*, where both *Jews* and *Samaritans* lived, he might receive this notion from the one or from the other; from the *Samaritans*, as *Buxtorff*[t] conjectures, who were continually boaſting of their language and letters, in which, they ſay, the law was given, a copy of which they pretend to have, written by *Phinehas* the

[r] Exercitat. in Matt. v. 18. ſ. 6. p. 67. [s] Apud Carpzov. Critic. par. 1. p. 240. [t] De Literis Heb. ſ. 61.

the ſon of *Eleazar*; or rather he might have this account from the *Jews* that reſided there. *Jerom*, who lived a little after *Euſebius*, and who might take what he writes from him, or rather from ſome of the *Jewiſh Rabbins* he had for his preceptors and inſtructors, for he had four of them at different times, is more confident, and ſays[u], "*certumque eſt*, &c. it is certain "that *Ezra* the ſcribe, and teacher of the "law, after *Jeruſalem* was taken and the "temple rebuilt under *Zerubbabel*, found "other letters, which we now uſe, when to "that time the characters of the *Samari-* "*tans* and *Hebrews* were the ſame;" but how could *Jerom* be certain of this, who lived near a thouſand years after the ſuppoſed fact? do *Ezra* or *Nehemiah* give the leaſt hint of ſuch a change of letters, tho' they relate things of much leſs conſequence than this? or do any of the other prophets ſuggeſt any thing of this kind? not the leaſt ſyllable. Do *Joſephus* or *Philo* the *Jew* ſay any thing about it? not one word, but the reverſe, as will be ſeen hereafter: from whence and from whom then could *Jerom* be aſſured of it? from no

[u] Præfat. in lib. Reg. Tom. 3. fol. 5. L.

no other than his *Jews* and their traditions; from whom it is certain he received many things, as his treatiſe called *Quæſtiones ſeu Traditiones Hebraicæ*, on various parts of ſcripture ſhew; which are all or moſt of them to be found in the *Talmud*, and other writings of the *Jews*, and particularly this. The *Jeruſalem Talmud* was printed about the year 230, long enough before *Jerom*, for him to have knowledge of it at leaſt from his inſtructors. The *Babylonian Talmud* was compiling in his time, tho' not finiſhed before the year 500; but the traditions it conſiſts of were well known before, being handed down from one to another, and with which *Jerom*'s *Jews* could furniſh him, and did. But what puts this matter out of all queſtion, is a fragment of *Origen*'s, publiſhed by *Montfaucon*[w], who alſo ſpeaks of letters uſed by *Ezra* after the captivity, different from the more antient ones, and plainly declares from whom he had it, and opens to us the true ſource of this notion: " in ſome accurate copies, " he ſays, it (the word *Jehovah*) is writ- " ten in antient *Hebrew* letters, but not " in thoſe now in uſe, φασι γαρ, for they ſay,



[w] Præliminar. in Hexapla Origen. p. 86.

" (that is, the *Jews*) that *Ezra* uſed others " after the captivity:" ſo that it clearly appears to be a *Jewiſh* tradition; and it is not improbable, that *Jerom* had what he calls *certain*, from this paſſage of *Origen*, as well as from *Euſebius*, ſuppoſing the paſſage in him to be genuine; and in which he might be confirmed by his *Rabbins*; ſo that all that has been ſaid about this matter comes from the ſame fountain, a *Jewiſh* tradition. And the tradition reſpecting it in the *Jeruſalem Talmud* [x] is as follows: " it " is a tradition; *R. Joſe* ſays, *Ezra* was " fit to have the law given by his hand, " but that the age of *Moſes* prevented it; " yet tho' it was not given by his hand, " the writing and the language were; " the writing was written in the *Syriac* " tongue and interpreted in the *Syriac* " tongue, *Ezra* iv. 7. and they could not " read the writing, *Dan.* v. 8. from hence " it is learnt, that it was given on the ſame " day. *R. Nathan* ſays, the law was " given in breaking, (in rude, rough, and " broken letters, ſuppoſed to be meant of " the *Samaritan*) and agrees with *R. Joſe*; " but *Rabbi* (i. e. *Judah Hakkodeſh*) ſays



" the

[x] T. Hieroſ. Megillah, fol. 71. 2, 3.

" the law was given in the *Aſſyrian* cha-
" racter (the ſquare letter) and when they
" ſinned, it was turned into breaking,
" (into a rough, and broken character) and
" when they were worthy, in the days of
" *Ezra*, it was turned to them again in
" the *Aſſyrian* character, according to *Zach.*
" ix. 12. It is a Tradition; *R. Simeon ben*
" *Eleazer* ſays, on the account of *R. Ele-*
" *azer Ben Parta*, who alſo ſays, on the
" account of *Eliezer Hammodai*, the law
" was written in the *Aſſyrian* character."
As it ſtands in the *Babylonian Talmud* [y], it
is thus expreſſed: " *Mar Zutra*, or as
" others *Mar Ukba*, ſays, at firſt the law
" was given to *Iſrael* in the writing beyond
" the river, (or the *Samaritan*) and the
" holy tongue; and again it was given to
" them, in the days of *Ezra*, in the *Aſſy-*
" *rian* writing, and *Syriac* tongue; they
" choſe for the *Iſraelites* the *Aſſyrian* wri-
" ting and the holy tongue, and left to the
" Ideots the writing beyond the river, and
" the *Syriac* tongue. Who are the Ideots? *R.*
" *Chaſda* ſays, the *Cuthites* (i. e. the *Sama-*
" *ritans*): what is the writing beyond the



[y] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 2. and 22. 1. and Zebachim, fol. 62. 1. and Gloſs. in ib.

" river ? *R. Chaſda* ſays, the *Libonæan* wri-
" ting ;" which the *Gloſs* explains of great letters, ſuch as are written in amulets and on door-poſts. Now tho' this account is far from being clear and plain, as to what is the ſenſe of theſe *Rabbins* ; yet admit it to be the ſenſe of *R. Joſe*, and of *Mar Zutra* or *Ukba*, that the law was written in *Samaritan* characters ; to which if you add *R. Nathan*, as agreeing with them, there are but three on that ſide of the queſtion ; whereas there are four who affirm it to be written in the *Aſſyrian*, or ſquare character, namely, *R. Judah* the ſaint, *R. Simeon*, and the two *Eleazers* ; and as for *R. Judah*, he was of ſo much account with the *Jews*, as to weigh down all others ; the deciſion of any matter in debate was, for the moſt part, according to him ; and it is to the latter ſentiment that the *Jews* now univerſally agree. There is but one, *R. Joſeph Albo*, on the other ſide of the queſtion, unleſs *Nachmanides* can be thought to be, which yet is doubtful[z]. now this ſeems to be the whole and ſole foundation of the above notion, which has prevailed ſo long among chriſtian writers.

[z] Vid. Buxtorf. de literis Heb. ſ. 20. 52, 53, 54.

ters. I cannot but remark the foible of ſome learned men, that if any thing againſt a received opinion is produced from the *Talmud*, and other *Jewiſh* writings, it is at once condemned as a *Jewiſh* dotage, dream and fable; but if it accords with a favourite hypotheſis, how greedily is it catched at? how tenaciouſly is it held? It is amazing that ſo many learned men ſhould give into the change of the *Jewiſh* letters by *Ezra*. It is not likely that the law ſhould be given to the *Iſraelites*, and the ſacred books be written in *Samaritan* letters, that is, in the old *Phœnician* characters, which belonged to the race of *Canaan*; and if they were, that the people of the *Jews* could be prevailed upon to part with them, in which their holy books were written; and if they were written in them, as then, beſides the *Pentateuch*, the books of *Joſhua*, *Judges*, *Samuel*, the Pſalms of *David*, and books of *Solomon*, and the Prophets before the captivity, muſt be written in the ſame character; and if ſo, it is ſtrange that not one copy of either of theſe ſhould be heard of, ſeen, or known; nor is it probable that the books of the Old Teſtament ſhould be written in two

different characters; thoſe before the captivity in *Samaritan* letters, and thoſe after it in the ſquare letters, as they muſt be according to this hypotheſis. It is not to be believed, that *Ezra* would attempt ſuch a change of himſelf without an order from God, which no where appears, when ſuch a charge againſt innovations ſtands in *Deut.* iv. 2. nor does it ſeem poſſible that he ſhould be able effectually to do it; it could never be in his power to call in all the copies of the ſacred books, which the *Iſraelites* had carried into the ſeveral parts of the world, thro' their captivities; nor is it probable that the *Samaritans*, if poſſeſſed of the ſquare character, which is grand and majeſtic, ſhould ever be prevailed upon to part with it, for a character ſo ugly, ſo ill ſhaped and deformed as the *Samaritan* is; nor was it in the power of *Ezra* to oblige them to it: to which may be added, that ſurely it can't be thought that thoſe ugly and ill-ſhaped letters were formed by the finger of God, and the law written by him in them, the contrary to which is now univerſally affirmed by the *Jews*; and yet with what confidence has this been aſſerted, and thoſe of a different ſentiment treated with

moſt

moſt abuſive language, unbecoming men of learning, by ſuch as *Scaliger*, *Druſius*, and *Voſſius*, as if they were men but half learned, half divines, mere fools, ſceptics, &c. but of late I obſerve this confidence abates, and learned men begin to think that it is far from being a determined point, what were the original characters of the *Hebrews*. The learned authors of the *Univerſal Hiſtory* [a] have taken the ſide of thoſe who are againſt the *Samaritan* characters, and are for the ſquare letters being the original *Hebrew*, and have given their reaſons for it; and I hope to make it appear, at leaſt probable, that the *Jews* always had and retained their letters and characters, and alſo the *Samaritans* theirs; and that there has been no commutation of letters between them: and to begin

With the *Jews*; though we cannot come to any certainty of their ancient letters and characters, yet there is a probability that they were the ſame in which their ſacred writings are now extant; and this is all I ſhall attempt to ſhew.

It has been obſerved that the *Hebrew* alphabet is the firſt of the *oriental* lan-

 guages,

[a] Vol. xvii. p. 302, 304.

guages, from whence the reſt have received theirs; but in name only, not in ſignification; for the ſignification of the names of the letters in the alphabet only correſpond with the figures of the ſquare letter; indeed though the Hebrew alphabet is obſerved in order no leſs than twenty times in the Old Teſtament, Pſal. xxv, xxxvii, cxi, cxii, cxix. eight times, cxiv. Prov. xxxi. *Lamentations* ſix times, yet not the name of one letter is given; but in the *Septuagint* verſion of the *Lamentations*, made three hundred years before Chriſt, the names of all of them are given juſt as they now are. The *Greeks* had the names of their letters very early, not only before the writing of the New Teſtament, in which mention is made of ſome of them, as of *Iota*, *Alpha*, and *Omega*; and in *Joſephus* * of *Theta*, and *Tau*; but *Herodotus* [b], who wrote his hiſtory between four and five hundred years before the birth of Chriſt, obſerves, that the *Perſian* names end in a letter which in the *Doric* dialect is called *San*, and in the *Ionic* dialect *Sigma*. *Plato* †, as early, makes

3 men-

* Antiqu. l. i. c. 6. [b] Clio, five l. i. c, 139.

† in Cratylo, p. 271, 284, 289, 289, 292, 297, Ed. Ficin.

mention of the names of ſeveral of the letters of the *Greek* alphabet; and *Homer*, ſome hundreds of years before them, has the names of the whole *Greek* alphabet; for his works, both his *Iliad* and his *Odyſſey*, the ſeveral books of them, have their titles from thence, and are called by their names; unleſs it ſhould be thought, as it is by ſome, that the titles are added by ſome ancient *Grammarians*; which names are chiefly taken from an *Eaſtern* alphabet: and as the *Greeks* are generally ſuppoſed to have their letters, at leaſt moſt of them, from the *Phœnicians*, they doubtleſs had the names of them along with them; and *Diodorus Siculus* ‡ expreſsly ſays, that as *Cadmus* brought the letters from *Phœnicia* into *Greece*, ſo he gave to every one their names, as well as formed their characters; and as the *Phœnician*, or old *Samaritan* alphabet conſiſted of letters of the ſame name, though of a different character from the *Hebrew*, it may reaſonably be ſuppoſed that the names are derived from thence, as the language is but a dialect of the *Hebrew*, with a little variation and deflexion from it; ſo that the *Hebrews* had theſe names

‡ Bibliothec. lib. 3. p. 200.

names originally; and it cannot be thought otherwiſe but that when their letters were firſt invented, and marks made for them, but names were given unto them; and *Capellus* [a] himſelf is quite clear and expreſs in this matter: "before the age of *Cad-* "*mus* the *Phœnician*, he ſays i. e. 1450 "years before the birth of Chriſt, the *He-* "*brew* letters had their own names, and "indeed the ſame with thoſe by which "they are now called, as is plain by com- "paring the *Greek* alphabet with the *He-* "*brew*;" and a little after he ſays, the ſame names of *Hebrew* letters are as they were three thouſand years ago: now the names of the letters of the *Hebrew* alphabet, though adopted by others, only correſpond in their ſignification with the figure of the ſquare letters now in uſe: thus according to various writers [b], א *Aleph* the firſt letter, ſignifies an ox, and its figure reſembles the head and horns of one, and as that, gives the lead to the reſt; ב Beth, an houſe, and it repreſents one, its foundation, wall,

[a] Arcanum punctat. Revelat. l. 1. c. 12. [b] Vid. Schindler. Lexicon Pentaglott. Herman. Hugonem de prima Scribend. Orig. c. 7. p. 69. &c. Waſmuth Vindiciæ Heb. par. 1. c. 1. p. 58, 86. Marckii Exercitat. ad Matt. v. 18. Bedford's Chronology, p. 497, and Dr. Gregory Sharpe's Origin of Languages, p. 60, &c.

wall, and roof, which with the *Hebrews* was flat; ג *Gimel* a camel, and it has the figure of its long neck and bunch on its back; ד *Daleth* a door, and it deſcribes the lintel and poſt of one; ה what it ſignifies and repreſents is not eaſy to ſay: ו *Vau*, an hook, and it reſembles one; ז *Zajin*, ſignifies armour, and has the figure of a dart, ſpear, or club; ח *Cheth* a beaſt, and its poſition is like that of a quadruped; ט *Teth*, folding or involving, as is the form of it; י *Jod*, an hand, the ſmall part of it the finger, it repreſents; כ *Caph*, the hollow of the hand, or a curvature, as its figure is; ל *Lamed*, a goad, and it is like one; מ *Mem*, a ſpot as is impreſſed on the hollow of the hand; נ *Nun*, a ſon, child, or infant, and it is thought to reſemble one ſitting; ס *Samech*, a ſupport, the pedeſtal of a column, to which it is not unlike; ע *Ain*, an eye, and it is the figure of one open; פ *Pe*, a mouth, an open one; צ *Tzadde*, a fork, and ſuch is its figure; ק *Koph*, a revolution, a ſemicircle, with a deſcending line, or a monkey, having the tail of one ר *Reſh*, the head, the hinder part of one it reſembles; ש *Schin*, a tooth, and is the figure of three teeth;

ת *Thau*

ת *Thau*, a mark, ſign, or border, being the boundary of the alphabet. Now the figures of the letters of the alphabet, neither in the *Samaritan* characters, nor in any other but the ſquare, will anſwer to the ſignification of theſe names.

As the *Hebrew* language was the firſt and primitive language, and was ſpoken by *Adam*, as has been ſhewn, it is probable the letters were firſt invented by him, as ſome have thought [c]; ſince as man is not only a ſpeaking, but a ſocial animal, it can hardly be imagined that *Adam* ſhould live ſo many years, and not conſider the advantage of letters to his poſterity, and atempt to form ſuch for their uſe; nor could arts and ſciences, which no doubt were found out in his time, be well cultivated without the uſe of letters. It is certain ſome of the arts and ſciences were in uſe before the flood, Gen. iv. 21. and very probably aſtronomy, as it muſt be, if there

[c] Suidas in voce Ἀδαμ. Hermannus Hugo, ut ſupra c. 3. p. [illegible]. Bibliander & alii in ib. The Jews aſcribe ſeveral writings to *Adam*, Wolfii Biblioth. Heb. p. 110, 111. In the *Talmud* they ſpeak of the book of the firſt *Adam*, T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 85, 2. and of a book the angel *Raziel* gave him, which bears the name of that angel, Zohar in Gen. fol. 43, 3 Some writers make mention of a book compoſed by *Abel* the ſon of *Adam*. See Bangi Cœlum Orient. p. 103, 123.

there is any truth in the hiſtory of the pillars erected by the poſterity of *Seth*, which muſt make writing neceſſary, as *Huygens* [d] obſerves : beſides, it is not reaſonable to ſuppoſe that *Adam* himſelf ſhould be without the knowledge of the ſciences, ſince the very firſt ſight of the heavenly luminaries would lead him into a contemplation of them, and to make future obſervations upon them ; and by obſerving their motions, appearance, and diſappearance, their revolutions, and the diſtinctions they made of days, months, and years, and of the ſeaſons, of ſummer and winter ; he muſt obtain by degrees a conſiderable knowledge of this ſcience. Some have thought [e] that the knowledge of all things natural, both terreſtrial, as plants, &c. and celeſtial, was of God infuſed into him, and implanted in his nature; and in whatſoever way he had it, it may be reaſonably concluded that he would communicate it to his poſterity, which ſeems to require the uſe of letters ; and *Scaliger* [f] made no doubt of it that the art of printing was known by him ; though

[d] Coſmotheoroſ. fol. 10. p. 56. [e] Vid. Lydiat defenſ. tract. de ann. form. c. 8. p. 26. [f] Apud Lydiat. ib, p. 125.

though that is not very probable, yet he might have the knowledge of letters, and of the uſe of them; indeed the *Indian Brachmans* [g], and the ancient *Druids* [h] and *Pythagoras* [i] taught their doctrines without the uſe of letters; but it was not through want of them, nor through mere neglect of them, but becauſe they had ſome peculiar ends to anſwer thereby: now if letters were invented by *Adam*, it ſeems moſt reaſonable that as his language, ſo his letters were continued to the times of *Noah*, and were communicated in the times of *Shem* through the families of *Eber* and *Abraham* to the people of *Iſrael*; and though the preciſe character cannot be determined, it is moſt probable, it was the ſquare character, as being the moſt expreſſive, perfect, and elegant. The Jewiſh writers are quite clear in this matter, that not only the letters but even the points and accents as they now are, were known to *Adam*, being taught him of God; as the author of the book of *Coſri* [k], and his commentator *R. Judah Muſcatus* [l].

If the pillars ſet up by the ſons of *Seth* could

[g] Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. dier. l. 2. c. 30. [h] Cæſar. Comment. l. 6. c. 13. [i] Alex ab. Alex. ut ſupra. [k] Coſri par. 4. ſ. 25. [l] Comment. in ib. fol. 229. 1.

could be depended on as genuine, there would be proof not only of the arts and ſciences, particularly aſtronomy, being known and taught, but of letters, and their uſe in their days; and to *Seth* himſelf the invention of letters has been aſcribed [m]; *Joſephus* [n] ſays, the pillars erected by his poſterity continued to his time: but it is not likely that theſe pillars, the one of brick, the other of ſtone, ſhould ſurvive the flood; and the account he has given of the place where they ſtood, is very dark and intricate; he calls it the land of *Syriad*, but whether he means *Syria*, or a place in the land of *Egypt*, or *Seirath* near *Gilgal*, Judg. iii. 26. each of which is gueſſed at [o], cannot be determined; nor does he give us the leaſt hint what kind of characters were upon them; and indeed had the pillars been really in being, it can ſcarcely be thought that the characters could be legible, or that even conjectures could be made of what they were. In *Syria* and *Meſopotamia* are ſaid to be ſome ancient books of the *Zabians*, which they pretend to be the patriarch *Seth*'s [p]; and the *Arabic* writers

[m] Vid. Suidam in voce Σηθ. [n] Antiqu. l. 1. c. 2. [o] Vid. Marſham Canon. ſecul. 1. p. 3. † Prideaux. Præfat. ad Marmor. Arundel. & Voſſium de ætate mundi, c. 10. p. 37. [p] Præfat. Hyde ad Hiſt. Relig. Perſ.

writers say [q], that *Seth* was the inventer of writing letters, and ſhewed them in the *Hebrew* tongue. If the account that is given of *Cainan*, the grandſon of *Seth*, could be credited, it would not only prove the uſe of letters in thoſe early times, but that the *Hebrew* letters were then uſed; the account is what is ſaid to be ſent by *Alexander* the Great, when in *India*, to his maſter *Ariſtotle*, and is as follows: "When I came to ſuch a place in *India*, "ſays he, the natives told me that they "had with them the ſepulchre of an an-"cient king that ruled over all the world, "whoſe name was *Cainan*, the ſon of "*Enos*, who foreſeeing that God would "bring a flood upon the earth, wrote his "prophecy of it on tables of ſtone, and "they are here; the writing is *Hebrew* "writing."

Enoch, the ſeventh from *Adam*, delivered out the prophecy referred to by the apoſtle *Jude*, ver. 14, 15. but whether it was written is not certain; it is not improbable it might be: the Jews make mention of a writing of his in their ancient book

[q] Elmacinus apud Hottinger. Smegma, p, 228. [r] Juchaſin, fol. 3. 2. ſo Ben Gorion, l. 2. c. 18. p. 131.

book of *Zohar* [f], and in the *Targum* of *Jonathan* on Gen. v. 24, he is called the great ſcribe; and ſeveral of the chriſtian fathers ſpeak of a book of his as authentic, as *Tertullian* [t] and others; and the *Arabic* writers [u] tell us of pyramids and pillars erected by him, on which he engraved the arts and the inſtruments of them; and ſome writers [w] aſcribe the invention of letters and writing of books to him; but what characters he wrote and engraved in are not ſaid: others [x] have pretended to give the alphabets of *Adam*, *Seth*, *Enoch*, and *Noah*; but the characters they give neither agree with the *Hebrew* nor with the *Samaritan*, and are mere figments, and are no more to be depended on than in what the prophecy of *Ham* the ſon of *Noah* was written, out of which *Pherecydes* the *Syrian*, is ſaid to take his allegories [y]. If *Abraham* the anceſtor of the Jewiſh nation was the inventor of letters, as ſome ſay, the *Hebrew* characters might

E bid

[f] In Gen. fol. 53. 2. and 74. 1. [t] De Cultu fæmin. l. 1. c. 3. vid. Bangi Cœlum Orient. Exercitat. 1. 24. Qu. 5. [u] Abulpharag. Hiſt. dynaſt. dyn. 1 p. 9. [w] Vid. Hugo. de orig. ſcribendi, c. 3. p. 41. Shalſhalet Hakabala fol. 94, 2. [x] Vid. Bangi ut ſupra, Exercitat. 2. Qu. 1. p 100, 101. 104. 105. [y] Vid. Clem. Ale. Stromat. *l.* 6. p. 642.

bid fair to be the firſt; nay, *Suidas* ſays [z] they were the ſacred letters he invented; and to him is ſometimes aſcribed the *cabaliſtic* book of the *Jews* called *Jetzirah* [a].

Some of the Jewiſh *Rabbins* ſay, that the grains of manna which fell from heaven about the tents of the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs were figured with the character of the *Hebrew* letter ו *Vau* very perfectly expreſſed; and that that is the principal reaſon why the wondering *Iſraelites* ſaid one to another מן הוא *Man hu*, which according to them is to ſay, what means this *vau?* the reaſon of which figure they ſuppoſe to be, becauſe the manna was only to be gathered on the *ſix* days of the week, which that letter numerically ſignifies: this is to be, treated as a mere fable, nor have I met with it in any writer but *Gaffarellus* [b]; all the advantage I make of it is this, that thoſe *Rabbins* who relate this, believed that the ſquare letters were in uſe before the giving of the law, for ſo early was the original deſcent of the manna; and indeed if the *Iſraelites* did not under-



[z] In voce Αβραμ, vid. Herman Hugo. ut ſupra, p. 41. [a] Coſri par 4. c. 27. Juchaſin fol. 52. 2. [b] Unheard of Curioſities, par. 4. c. 12. p. 352.

ſtand letters before the giving of the law, of what uſe could the writing of it be unto them? and to what purpoſe was it written and brought unto them.

It is not only the opinion of ſome Chriſtian writers [e] that the *Hebrews* received their letters firſt from *Moſes* thro' the giving of the law unto them, but even *Eupolemus*, an heathen writer, as quoted both by *Clement* of *Alexandria* [d], and *Euſebius* [e], affirms that *Moſes* firſt delivered letters to the *Jews*, which is received by many [f]; however this be, it is certain, the law was written in letters engraved by God himſelf, and given to *Moſes* for the *Iſraelites*; and it is moſt probable, as has been already obſerved, that thoſe letters were not the ill-ſhaped letters of the *Samaritans*, the ſame with thoſe of the old *Phœnicians* or *Canaanites*, but the noble, majeſtic ſquare letters, in which the books of the law and prophets are now extant.



[c] Vid. Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 18. c. 39. Iſidor. Origin. l. 1. c. 3. and chronic. p. 263. [d] Stromat. l. 1. p. 343. [e] Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c 26. [f] So Clemens Roman. Cornelius Agrippa, Crinitus, Textor, Gyraldus apud Herman. Hugo. ut ſupra, MS. in Vatican. Biblioth. apud Waſer. de Numis Heb. l. 2 c. 3. vid. Owen. Theologoumena l. 4. Digreſſ. 1. p. 301.

*Philo* the *Jew* [g], ſays, the law was anciently written in the *Chaldee* language, that is, in the *Hebrew* language, properly ſo called; for, as *Jerom* [h] obſerves, *Philo* thought the *Hebrew* and *Chaldee* were the ſame language; and nothing is more common with the *Jews* [i], than to ſay the writing in which the law was given, is the *Aſſyrian* language and writing, by which they mean the modern *Hebrew* letters, in diſtinction from the *Samaritan*, as appears by what has been quoted out of the *Talmud*, and which they expreſly ſay [k] is what they now write in. This they call the *Aſſyrian* tongue and writing, from the word *Aſher*, which ſignifies happy and bleſſed, being happy and bleſſed above all languages; or becauſe they had it from their anceſtor *Abraham*, who came out of *Aſſyria*; and as they carried it into *Aſſyria*, when led captive thither, ſo it came out of *Aſſyria* with them, when they came from thence [l]; and that the tables of the law were written in it, is generally agreed on, by them,

[g] De vita Moſis. l. 1. p. 657, 658. [h] Comment. in Dan. i. 4. [i] Balmeſii mikneh Abraham, p. 2. lin. 26. [k] Gloſſ. in T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 8 2 Shalſhalet Hakabala, fol. 74. 2. [l] T. Bab. Sanhedri. fol. 21. 1. and Balmeſ. ut ſupra, lin. 24, 25. and p. 6. lin. 13. 14.

them. *R. Jacob* ſays [m], the whole world acknowledge that the tables and book of the law, which were in the ark, were written in the *Aſſyrian* character, by which they mean the ſquare character; that is, the whole *Jewiſh* nation, a few, only excepted, not more than two or three [n]. If the mediums of proof made uſe of by the *Jews* could be admitted as valid, as they cannot, it would put the matter out of all doubt, that the ſquare letters were as early as the law: they obſerve, that the hooks of the pillars in *Exod.* xxvii. 10. are called *Vaus*, and as the pillars were not changed, ſo the *Vaus* were not changed; from whence they conclude the *Vaus* were made like hooks, and that in the days of *Moſes* the *Vaus* were like thoſe now in uſe [o]; and what is true of one letter is true of the reſt; and that their letters were never changed, and which they alſo conclude from Eſth. viii. 9. They have likewiſe a notion that the letters of the law were perforated, ſo that the figures of the letters could be ſeen on both ſides,



[m] In En Iſrael Megillah, c. 1. fol. 415. 1. [n] Vid. Buxtorf. de lit. Heb. ſ. 20. 23. [o] T. Hieroſ. Megillah, fol. 71. 3. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 22. 1. and Gloſs. in ib.

wherefore they obſerve ם *Mem clauſum* and ס *Samech* which were in the tables, ſtood miraculouſly [p]; for they being near or like to a circle or an O, they had nothing to adhere to, or ſubſiſt by, but muſt fall, unleſs ſupported by a miracle. Now though theſe notions cannot be allowed of, they ſerve to ſhew the ſenſe of the *Jews*, that the ſquare letters were then in being, ſince theſe obſervations will not agree with the ſaid letters in the *Samaritan* alphabet; nay, they ſay that the forms of letters, vowels and accents were written by God on the tables, as we now have them [q].

It was uſual in ancient time to inſcribe things on rocks and mountains, in order to perpetuate them to poſterity, to which *Job* may allude, ch. xix. 24. thus *Semiramis* engraved her image and an hundred ſhield-bearers by her at the bottom of a rock, and wrote upon the rock in *Syriac* letters, as *Diodorus Siculus* relates [r]; ſo the *Arabians*, *Phœnicians*, and *Egyptians*, and others, before the uſe of paper, engraved their ſentiments on rocks and ſtones [s].

*The-*

[p] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol 104. [q] Tipheret Iſrael in Broughton's works, p. 506. 670. 684. 703. [r] Biblioth. l. 2. p 100 101. [s] Plin. l. 6. c. 28. vid. Huet. Demonſtrat Evangel. c. 2. ſ. 15.

*Themiſtocles* cut letters upon ſtones which the *Ionians*, coming the day after to *Artemiſium*, read, as *Herodotus* reports [t]; and it was uſual with the *Danes* to write the acts and deeds of their anceſtors in verſe, and engrave them in their own language on rocks and ſtones [u]. In a journal made about forty years ago, from grand *Cairo* to mount *Sinai*, a tranſlation of which is publiſhed by Dr. *Clayton*, late biſhop of *Clogher*, it is related [w], that thoſe who made it came to ſome hills near mount *Sinai*, called the written mountains; on which with others they paſſed for an hour together, were engraved ancient unknown characters, cut into the hard marble rock, twelve or fourteen feet diſtant from the ground; and though they had ſeveral in company acquainted with the *Arabic*, *Greek*, *Hebrew*, *Syriac*, &c. none of them had any knowledge of thoſe characters. The biſhop thought it probable that theſe were the ancient *Hebrew* characters, which the *Iſraelites* having learned to write after the giving of the law on mount *Sinai*, di-



[t] Urania, five, l 8.c. 22. vide Melpomene, five l. 4. c. 87.
[u] Salmuth. in Pancirol. par. 2. p. 256. [w] Journal &c. p. 45, 46. Ed. 2.

verted themſelves with practiſing it during their forty years abode in the wilderneſs; and he was of opinion that the ancient *Hebrew* characters might be recovered by them; wherefore he propoſed to the Society of *Antiquarians* in *London*, to ſend a proper perſon thither for that end, and offered to bear a proportion in the expence of it; and could thoſe characters be recovered, and an alphabet formed out of them, it would doubtleſs determine what was the ancient figure of the *Hebrew* letters. About an hundred years before the above journal was begun, *Petrus a Valle* and *Thomas a Novaria* tranſcribed ſeveral of them, which the former had in his poſſeſſion, and ſhewed them to ſome Jews, to whom ſome of the letters ſeemed to be like to thoſe of the *Hebrew* now in uſe, others like the *Samaritan*, and others agreed with neither; but the ſenſe of them none could underſtand [p]. Now theſe letters were no doubt of one and the ſame alphabet, form and figure originally, and if many of them are of the ſquare form, or like thoſe *Hebrew* letters now in uſe, and thoſe the greater part of them, as it ſhould

[p] Antiq. Eccl. oriental. p. 147.

ſhould ſeem by their being mentioned firſt; I ſhould think they were all when firſt written of the ſame form; and that ſuch of them as are now broken and disjointed, are thoſe ſaid to be like to the *Samaritan* letters, which are rough and deformed; hence the Jews call them רוּעַץ, a fracture, broken, and uneven; and ſuch that agreed with neither, thoſe that are greatly effaced by time; and I am the more ſtrengthened in this ſuppoſition by the relation of *Coſmas Ægyptius*, who travelled into thoſe parts in the ſixth century, more than twelve hundred years ago; who teſtifies, that he himſelf ſaw many ſtones in the wilderneſs engraved by the *Hebrews* in *Hebrew* letters, in memory of their journey in it [q]; his account, as *Montfaucon* [r] relates it is, that in the wilderneſs of *Sinai*, and in all the manſions of the *Hebrews*, you may ſee ſtones fallen from the mountains, all engraved with *Hebrew* letters, as, ſays he, I teſtify, who travelled that way. Now I imagine that this man in that age could have no other notion of *Hebrew* letters than of thoſe then in uſe with

[q] Vid. Fabritii Bibliothec. Græc. Tom. 2. p. 615. [r] in Dr. Kennicott's Diſſert. 2. p. 147. 148.

with the *Jews*; and he adds, ſome *Jews* who read theſe inſcriptions told us, they ſignified ſo and ſo—ſuch a journey—out of ſuch a tribe—in ſuch a year—in ſuch a month—i. e. ſuch and ſuch things were done. Now the letters which theſe *Jews* were converſant with, and capable of reading and interpreting, ſeem more likely to be the *Hebrew* letters, which they then uſed, than the *Samaritan*, which it is not reaſonable to ſuppoſe they would give themſelves the trouble of learning, having nothing to do with the *Samaritans*, but at enmity with them.

THE plate of gold on the forehead of the high-prieſt, on which was engraven *holineſs to the Lord*, the *Jews*[r] diſpute about it, whether this was in more lines than one, and what letters were in a line, but it was never a queſtion with them in what character it was written. *Jerom* ſays[t] indeed, that the word *Jehovah* was in his time found written in antient letters, in ſome *Greek* volumes; but it ſhould be obſerved, that *Jerom* ſpeaks not of *Jewiſh* or *Hebrew* copies, but of *Greek* volumes, meaning

[r] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 63. 2. & Succah, fol. 5. 1. [t] Præfat. in lib. Reg. fol. 5. L.

meaning the *Greek* verſions of *Aquila* and *Theodotion* in *Origen*'s *Hexapla*, and of antient *Hebrew* letters in the ſaid *Greek* verſions, where the word *Jehovah* was written in *Hebrew* characters thus, ΠΙΠΙ, which the *Greeks* not underſtanding, and being deceived with the ſimilarity of the characters to ſome of theirs, read it from the left to the right, as they were wont to do, *Pipi*; whereas the word was to be read no other than *Jehovah*, and was written neither in *Greek* nor in *Samaritan* characters, but in *Hebrew* letters, as ſometimes figur'd, or however as formed by ſome *Greek* writers not expert in the *Hebrew* letters, as may be ſeen in a ſpecimen of ſuch letters, given by *Montfaucon*[u], which ſeem to have been written by ſome *Grecian* who had but little knowledge of the *Hebrew* tongue and its characters, in which the *Hebrew* letter *He*, tho' *Schindler* would have it to be the *Samaritan He*, reſembles the *Greek* letter *Pi*, and the letters *Vau* and *Jod* are very ſimilar in *Hebrew*, and both have ſome likeneſs to the *Greek* letter *Iota*. *Druſius* out of *Procopius* on *Iſ.* lix. 13. obſerves, that in his margin were written A. Th.

εν

[u] Præliminar. ad Hexapla Origen. c. 2. p. 22.

εν ΠΙΠΙ, that is *Aquila*, and *Theodotion* ſo read; and he further obſerves, that ſo formerly they wrote the letters of the name tetragrammaton or *Jehovah*, which they read *Pipi*, becauſe of the ſimilitude of the letters[w]; and *Jerom*[x] himſelf is as expreſs for it as can be, he ſays the name of four letters is written with theſe, *Jod* י, *He* ה, *Vau* ו, *He* ה, which ſome not underſtanding, becauſe of the likeneſs of the characters, when they found it in *Greek* copies, uſed to read it *Pipi*; and elſewhere[y] he ſays, the name of God, on the plate of gold, was written in *Hebrew* letters, thoſe abovementioned; hence, becauſe as *R. Aſariah*[z] underſtands him, he affirmed that theſe were engraved in the *Aſſyrian* character, he conjectures that *Jerom* had ſeen the plate of gold at *Rome*, which *R. Eliezer ben Joſe*, ſaw there, and that *Jerom* was of the mind that the preſent *Hebrew* letters, were then uſed by the *Jews*; and indeed it is not probable that this plate ſhould be engraved in the *Samaritan*, that is in the letters

[w] Vid. etiam Druſium de voce Elohim & Tetragram. c. 20. &. Grotium in Matt. xxii. 44. Montfaucon. præliminar. ad Hexapla Origen. vol. 2. p. 90. 184. Lexicon col. 430.
[x] Epiſt ad Marcellam Tom. 3. fol. 31. B. [y] Ad Fabiolam fol. 20. B. [z] Meor Enayim, c. 58. fol. 178. 2.

ters of the old *Phœnicians* or *Canaanites*, the race of *Canaan*, whom the *Jews*, when this order about the plate was given to *Moſes*, were going to drive out of their land. It muſt be owned that *Origen* has the following words in a fragment[a] of his; "with "the *Jews* the name of the four letters "*(Jehovah)* is ineffable, which was en- "graved on the golden plate of the high- "prieſt, and with the *Greeks* is pro- "nounced Lord (κυριος); but in correct *He-* "*brew* copies it is written (that is, with "its four letters *Jehovah*, which may be "believed; but when he adds, it was writ- "ten) in antient letters, but not in thoſe "now in uſe." If he means the *Samaritan* letters, as it is ſuppoſed he does; this depends on a *Jewiſh* tale he next relates, which has been already conſidered.

That the *Pentateuch* written by *Moſes* was written in the ſquare characters or letters now in uſe with the *Jews*, ſeems clear by comparing *Gen.* x. 3, 4. with 1 *Chron.* i. 6. where the perſons called *Riphath* and *Dodanim* by *Moſes*, are by the author of the book of *Chronicles* in ſome copies called *Diphath* and *Rodanim*; and who is called *Hemdan* in *Gen.*

[a] Apud Montfaucon. ut ſupra, p. 86.

*Gen.* xxxvi. 26. is *Hemram* in 1. *Chron.* i. 41. and *Hadar* in *Gen.* xxxvi. 39. is *Hadad* in 1 *Chron.* i. 50. The author of the book of *Chronicles*, thro' the ſimilarity of the letters ר and ד *Reſh* and *Daleth*, puts one for another, and ſtill ſignify the ſame perſons; ſo *Riblah* in *Numb.* xxxiv. 11. and as it is read in the 2d book of *Kings*, and prophecy of *Jeremiah*, is in *Ezek.* vi. 14. called *Diblath*; on which *Jerom* remarks, that the near likeneſs of the *Hebrew* letters ר and ד *Daleth* and *Reſh*, which are diſtinguiſhed by a ſmall *apex*, it may be called *Deblatha*, or *Reblatha*; and ſo *Theodotion* reads it *Deblatha* in *Jer.* xxxix. 5. and this will account for the ſame man being called *Deuel* and *Reuel*, *Numb.* i. 14. and ii. 14. Now this can't be owing to the miſtakes of late tranſcribers, ſince the ſame difference is obſerved in the *Septuagint* verſion of theſe places, at leaſt in moſt of them, and were ſo from the beginning, from the writers themſelves; and thoſe letters being much more ſimilar in the *Hebrew* than in the *Samaritan* alphabet, the *Samaritan Daleth* having a hook at the back of it thus ᚣ which ſtrikes the eye at once, and eaſily diſtinguiſhes it from ᚱ *Reſh*, ſhews that *Moſes*,

*ſes*, in all probability, wrote in the former and not in the latter; ſo likewiſe differences of names in the ſame books plainly ariſe from the ſimilarity of the letters י and ו *Jod* and *Vau* in the *Hebrew* ſquare characters, when there is no ſuch ſimilarity in the *Samaritan* character ו and י, as to occaſion ſuch differences, thus *Alvan* in *Gen.* xxxvi. 23. is *Alian* 1 *Chron.* i. 40. *Vaakan Gen.* xxxvi. 27. is *Jaakan* 1. *Chron.* i. 42. *Zepho Gen.* xxxvi. 11. is *Zephi* 1 *Chron.* i. 36. *Shepho* in *Gen.* xxxvi. 23. is *Shephi* 1 *Chron.* i. 40. *Alvah Gen.* xxxvi. 40. is *Aliah* 1 *Chron.* i. 51. *Pau Gen.* xxxvi. 39. is *Pai* 1 *Chron.* i. 50. *Heman Gen.* 22. is *Homam* 1 *Chron.* i. 39. *Kimchi* on 1 *Chron.* i. 6, 7. takes notice of the difference of theſe ſeveral words, as read in *Geneſis* and *Chronicles*, and attributes it to the ſimilarity of letters; and obſerves, that let them be read as they may, they are the ſame names, and ſo *Ben Melech* after him.

*Aben Ezra* has helped us to another proof of the *Pentateuch* being written in the ſquare character; he obſerves, "that the word היה in *Exod.* i. 10. is irregular according to the grammar, and ſhould be חיתה for *He* radical is changed into *Tau*, according

ding to uſual conſtruction, as in *Gen.* i. 30. but ſo it is, becauſe theſe letters are near alike in writing, there being only the duct of a point between them, which is in the letter *He*, but in pronunciation and name they differ; for at firſt it is called *He*, and when the point is protracted it is called *Tau*; and this is a ſign or proof that the writing we now uſe is *Hebrew*:" and as the *Pentateuch* was originally written in this character, ſo it continued until the *Samaritan Pentateuch* was written, which plainly appears to be copied from it, by its having the interpolations of *Ezra*'s copy in it, which it would not have had, had it been more antient than that; and if it was firſt brought to the *Samaritans*, as is probable, by *Manaſſeh*, when he fled to them, it was in the ſquare character firſt introduced among them, as Dr. *Prideaux* owns[b], who otherwiſe is an advocate for the *Samaritan* letter being the antient *Hebrew* character. That this was the caſe, appears from the difference between the *Hebrew* and *Samaritan Pentateuch*, occaſioned by the ſimilarity of the letters in the ſquare character, the ſame with that now in uſe with the *Jews*,

[b] Connection, part 1. p. 416, 417.

*Jews*, as has been obſerved by many learned men[c], particularly in *Reſh* and *Daleth*, ſee *Gen.* x. 4. and xlix. 10. which ſhews that the *Pentateuch* was originally in the modern *Hebrew* characters, and which is ſuperior in point of antiquity to the *Samaritan*, which is copied from it; and to the ſame cauſe, in many inſtances, is owing the difference between the *Hebrew* text and the *Septuagint* verſion, namely the ſimilarity of the *Hebrew* letters, as *Jerom* frequently obſerves; for that was made out of the *Chaldee* tongue, as *Philo* the *Jew*[d] affirms, that is the *Hebrew* according to him; and *Juſtin Martyr*[e] aſſerts, that *Moſes*, under a divine inſpiration, wrote his hiſtory in *Hebrew* letters, (he does not ſay in *Samaritan*, tho' he himſelf was a *Samaritan*) and that out of their antient books written in *Hebrew* letters, the *Septuagint* or 70 elders made their tranſlation, which books in *Hebrew* letters were then preſerved by the *Jews* in their ſynagogues. *Ptolemy*, king of *Egypt*, had only at firſt the *Hebrew* bible in *Hebrew* letters, tranſcribed and ſent him; but not being able to

F read

[c] Hottinger. Antimorin. p. 50. Carpzov. Critic. ſacr. p. 229. 604. 610. Univerſal Hiſtory, vol 17. p. 305. [d] De vita Joſephi, l. 1. p. 658. [e] Ad Græcos, p. 13.

read and underſtand it, he ſent for men out of *Judea* to tranſlate it into *Greek*[f]; and *Tertullian*[g] affirms, that in the *Serapeum*, or library of *Ptolemy*, the tranſlation was to be ſeen in his time, with the *Hebrew* letters themſelves, from which the tranſlation was made; and certain it is, as the authors of the *Univerſal Hiſtory*[h] have obſerved, that the *Septuagint* verſion is of higher antiquity than any of thoſe ſhekels which are ſaid to have the *Samaritan* characters on them, the eldeſt of which did not precede the ſettlement of the high-prieſthood in the *Aſmonean* family, that is not much above 150 years before *Chriſt*; and yet this is the main argument advanced in defence of the *Samaritan* letters being the antient *Hebrew* characters; of the validity of which, and the genuineſs of the *Samaritan* ſhekels, more heareafter.

The argument in favour of the *Pentateuch* being written in the ſquare character, taken from the ſimilarity of *Daleth* and *Reſh*, occaſioning different readings of words, may be uſed with reſpect to the ſecond book of *Samuel*, as written in the ſame character,

[f] Epiphan. de ponder. [g] Apologet. c. 18. [h] Ut ſupra, p. 301, 304, 305.

racter, the penmen of which ſeem to be *Gad* and *Nathan*, ſee 1 *Chron.* xxix. 19. in which the king of *Zobah* is called *Hadadezer*, 2 *Sam.* viii. 3. but the writer of the book of *Chronicles*, generally ſuppoſed to be *Ezra*, putting *Reſh* for *Daleth*, thro' the likeneſs of the letters, calls him *Hadarezer*, 1 *Chron.* xviii. 3. and ſo one of *David*'s worthies is called *Shammah* the *Harodite*, 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 25. but in 1 *Chron.* xi. 27. *Shammoth* the *Harorite*; where may be obſerved another difference, ariſing from the ſame cauſe, the likeneſs of the letters ר and ד the ſame man being called *Shammah* in one place, and *Shammoth* in the other; and that it cannot be owing to the miſtakes of late tranſcribers, ſince the ſame difference is to be obſerved in the *Septuagint* verſion of both places; beſides there is another difference in the name. *Harodite* in *Sam.* is written with a ד *Cheth*, and the *Harorite* in *Chronicles* with an ה *He*, which two letters are alſo very ſimilar in the ſquare character; whereas, neither the ה *He* and ת *Tau*, nor the ח *Cheth* and ה *He* are at all alike in the *Samaritan* character. So that the ſame that is called *Hiddai* 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 30. is *Hurai* or *Churai*, 1 *Chron.*

xi. 32. and another is called the *Gadite* 2 *Sam.* 23. 36. and *Haggeri*, or the *Haggerite*, 1 *Chron.* xi. 38. ſo thro' the likeneſs of *Jod* and *Vau* in the ſquare character, which have none in the *Samaritan*, as before obſerved, the king of *Tyre* is called *Hiram*, 1 *Kings.* v. 1, 2. and *Huram* 2 *Chron.* ii. 3. 11.

*Aben Chabib* or *R. Moſes Schem Tob*, a Jew, who lived about the year 1480, was ſhewn in the kingdom of *Valentia* in *Spain*, a ſepulchral monument of a general of *Amaziah* king of *Judah*, on the top of a mountain; which, tho' much effaced, he was juſt able to read a verſe or two in rhyme and metre, at the end of which was לאמציה[i]; from whence he concluded that ſuch kind of verſe was in uſe with his anceſtors, when in their own land: and he might have concluded alſo the antiquity of the *Hebrew* letters, as *Buxtorff*[k] obſerves, could this inſcription be thought genuine; but it is hard to conceive how a general of *Amaziah*, king of *Judah*, ſhould be buried in *Spain:* and of like credit muſt be accounted the grave of *Adoniram*, the tax-gatherer

[i] R. Azariah, Imre Binah, c. 60. fol. 182. [k] De liter. Heb. f. 27. & de proſod. metric. ad calc. Heb. Gram.

gatherer for *Solomon* and *Rehoboam*, in the ſame country, and found at the ſame time[l]; and could the account be credited which *Benjamin* of *Tudela* gives of the cave of *Machpelah*, where he ſays there are ſix graves, of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, *Sarah*, *Rebecca* and *Leah*, oppoſite to one another, on which are written "this is the grave of *Abraham*," and ſo on the grave of *Iſaac*, and on the reſt, it would prove the very early antiquity of ſuch letters; but theſe are not to be depended on.

THE *Hebrews* have five letters, which they call double letters, or final ones, becauſe the figure of them is different at the end of a word, from what it is at the beginning of one, or in the middle of one; and theſe are *Mem*, *Nun*, *Tzade*, *Pe*, and *Caph*, commonly called מנצפך *Manatzpach*; theſe muſt be of very antient uſe, they are mentioned in *Bereſhith Rabba*[n], and in both the *Talmuds*; in the one[o] they are ſaid to be uſed by the ſeers or prophets, and in the other[p] to be an *Halacah* or tradition of *Moſes* from *Sinai*; yea, by an antient writer[q] they are ſaid to be known by *Abra-*



[l] Vid. Hottinger. præfat. ad Cipp. Heb. p. 4. [m] Itinerar. p. 48, 49. [n] Paraſh. 1. fol. 1, 4. [o] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 104. 1. [p] T. Hieroſ. Megillah, fol. 71. 4. [q] Pirke Eliezer c. 48.

*ham*; and indeed they ſeem to be as early as the other letters in the alphabet. Hence *Abraham de Balmis*[r] makes the *Hebrew* alphabet conſiſt of twenty-ſeven letters; and *Jerom*[s] ſpeaks of theſe five final letters as of as early, and equal uſe with the twenty-two letters, and ſo *Epiphanius*[t]; and *Irenæus*†, before them, is thought, by Dr. *Grabe* to refer to a final *Hebrew* letter, when he ſays, "that God, in *Hebrew*, is called *Baruch* (bleſſed) which conſiſts of two letters and a half;" Dr. *Grabe*'s note upon it is, that ך is taken for half of the letter ח; but in that he is miſtaken, for the word has not that letter, nor has that letter a final, but כ, and the final of that does not ſhorten, but lengthen the letter. Now if theſe final letters were of *Moſes* and the prophets, then the law and the prophets muſt be written in the *Hebrew* characters now in uſe, and not in the *Samaritan* characters, for the *Samaritans* have no final letters; and particularly the book of the prophet *Iſaiah*, which was written 200 years or more before the ſuppoſed change of letters by *Ezra*, muſt be written not in the *Samaritan*

[r] Mikneh Abraham, pag. 2. lin. 12, 13. [s] Præfat. ad lib. Reg. fol. 5. M. [t] De menſur. & ponder. † Adv. Hæreſ. l. 2 c. 41.

*ritan* character, according to that notion, but in the modern *Hebrew*; ſince the *Mem* final, contrary to common uſage, appears in the middle of the word למרבה *Iſ.* ix. 6. which has occaſioned much ſpeculation and enquiry, both among the Jews and chriſtians, which could not appear if written in the *Samaritan* character; in which, as before obſerved, are no final letters; and that it was ſo read in the antient *Hebrew* copies, is clear from both *Talmuds*[u], where it is written and reaſoned upon, and the *Jeruſalem Talmud* was finiſhed A. D. 230. *Jerom*[w] owns the reading of it, and offers a reaſon for it, and obſerves that the *Mem clauſum*, in the middle of the word למרבה is ſo written for the ſake of a myſtery, to ſhew the excluſion of the Jews from the kingdom of Chriſt; even that ſame *Jerom* makes this remark, who ſays, *it is certain* that *Ezra* changed the Jewiſh letters; but if *Iſaiah* wrote in the *Samaritan* character, as that change ſuppoſes, it would ſpoil the remark he has made; in this he contradicts himſelf. This is an obſervation of *Waſmuth*'s; but I ſuſpect that *Waſ-*



[u] T. Hieroſ. Sanhedrin, fol. 27. 4. T. Bab. ib. fol. 94 1.
[w] Apud Waſmuth. Vindic. Heb. par. 1. p. 44.

*muth* has miſtaken *Hieronymus de ſancta fide*, a later writer, who wrote a book againſt the Jews, for *Hieronymus* the antient father; ſince I can find no ſuch treatiſe as is referred to by him in *Jerom*'s works, either genuine or aſcribed to him.

THE book of *Daniel*, if written by himſelf, as it ſeems plainly to be, muſt be written before the pretended change of letters by *Ezra*; the Jews in the *Talmud*[x] indeed ſay it was written by the men of the great ſynagogue, that is the ſynagogue of *Ezra*; but the reaſon given for it is frivolous, as in the *Gloſs* upon the place, that prophecy was not ſuffered to be written without the land (of *Iſrael*); for did not *Moſes* write the *Pentateuch* without the land? and was not *Ezekiel* ordered by God to write among the captives at the river *Chebar*, *Ezek.* i. 3. and xxiv. 2.? *Joſephus*[y] is expreſs for it, that *Daniel* wrote his own prophecies, and left them to be read, and this is clear from the book itſelf, ch. xii. 4. and from the words of Chriſt in *Matt.* xxiv. 15. now ſince this book was written partly in *Hebrew*, and partly in *Chaldee*,

[x] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1. c. 14. f. 7.

[y] Antiqu. l. 10.

*Chaldee*, I aſk, in what letter it is moſt probable it was written, whether in two different characters? which ſeems not at all probable, and whether in one character; what moſt probably that was, whether the *Samaritan* or the ſquare letter? it ſhould ſeem more probable to be the latter, according to the hypotheſis of thoſe who are for the change of letters by *Ezra*, who ſuppoſe that was the character uſed in *Chaldea* and *Babylon*, where *Daniel* lived; and I ſhould think it more probable for another reaſon, becauſe it was better known to the *Jews*, for whoſe uſe chiefly that book was written: and particularly it deſerves conſideration, in what letter or character the hand-writing *Belſhazzar* ſaw on the wall was written, which the *Chaldeans* could not read, only *Daniel* the *Jew*. It is certain the words in *Daniel* v. 25. are *Chaldee*, and had they been written in their own characters, which were the ſame ſince called *Samaritan*, as will be ſhewn in the following chapter; the *Chaldeans*, no doubt, could have read them, though they might not have underſtood the meaning of them: now tho' we can't be certain of the character, yet it is probable it was the ſquare

character

character then and now in uſe with the *Jews*, to which *Daniel* was accuſtomed before he came to *Babylon*, and therefore could eaſily read the hand-writing, tho' without doubt it was by divine inſpiration that he gave the interpretation of it. *Joſephus ben Gorion*[c] is quite clear in this; the letters, he ſays, were the holy tongue, that is, *Hebrew*, but the writing or words were the *Syriac* tongue, or the *Chaldee*; and indeed if theſe words had been in a different character from that which *Daniel* wrote, it is much he had not given them in it.

*Bianconi*[a], the laſt that wrote on the antiquity of the *Hebrew* letters, is of opinion that the *Chaldeans* uſed the ſame characters with the *Hebrews*. He ſuppoſes their language to be the ſame, which he argues from the relation of *Abraham* and *Nahor* being brethren, and from the *Hebrews* deſcending from the one, and from the other the *Chaldeans*; hence *Joſephus*[b] calls the *Chaldeans* their kindred; tho' perhaps the latter rather ſprung from *Arphacſad*; he

[c] Hiſt. Heb. l. 1. c. 5. p. 25.
[a] De Antiq. liter. Heb. p. 6. Bononiæ 1748.
[b] Contr. Apion. l. 1. ſ. 13.

he urges the converſation which paſſed between *Abraham*'s ſervant and *Nahor*'s family, when he was ſent thither to take a wife for *Iſaac*, and what paſſed between the men of *Haran*, *Nahor*'s city, and *Jacob*, and between him and *Rachel* and *Laban*, in which there appear'd to be no difficulty of underſtanding one another. All which is true, and yet the language might not be exactly the ſame; the *Chaldee* being a dialect of the *Hebrew*, might be underſtood by the *Hebrews*, eſpecially in thoſe earlier and purer times, when the deviation from the *Hebrew* might not be ſo great as afterwards; and yet it is certain that *Jacob* and *Laban* uſed a different language, at the time of their covenanting together, and gave different names to the heap which was the witneſs between them, tho' to the ſame ſenſe. This learned writer indeed thinks that the *Chaldean* name of it was given by anticipation, and that it was called ſo by *Laban*'s ſons afterwards, which being known to *Moſes*, he inſerted it: but be it ſo, that will prove the difference of that language in the times of *Moſes* at leaſt, and which, in the times of *Hezekiah*, appears to be ſtill more different from the *Hebrew*,

ſince the common people among the *Jews* underſtood it not, 2 *Kings* xviii. 26. and in the times of the captivity, ſome of the *Hebrews*, carried captive, were taught the *Chaldean* tongue, *Dan.* i. 4. and the difference between that and the *Hebrew* may be ſeen in the books of *Daniel* and *Ezra*, yea, it is called a language not known nor underſtood by the *Jews*, *Jer.* v. 15. now from the ſameneſs of language, as this writer ſuppoſes, he proceeds to argue the ſameneſs of character, which however probable it may be thought to be, it is not concluſive. The *Syriac* and *Chaldee* are nearer to each other, than either to the *Hebrew*, and yet their characters are very different, at leaſt as we now have them. But what this learned writer ſeems chiefly to depend upon, and what he thinks to be greatly to his purpoſe is, the inſtance of *Cyrus* being able to read the prophecies in *Iſaiah*, concerning himſelf, according to *Joſephus*[c]; which he imagines he could not have done, if the *Chaldee* and *Hebrew* characters were not the ſame. He ſuppoſes he underſtood the *Chaldee* language, and could read that, having been ſome time in the court of *Darius*; but

[c] Antiq. l. 11. c. 1. ſ. 2.

but that is not quite certain, ſince at his taking of *Babylon* it does not appear that the *Chaldee* tongue was much known in his army; for he then gave orders, according to *Xenophon* [d], to thoſe who underſtood the *Syrian* or *Chaldee* language to proclaim that ſuch of the inhabitants that were found in the ſtreets, ſhould be ſlain, but thoſe that kept within doors ſhould be ſafe; and it was immediately after this, even in the firſt year of his reign with *Darius*, that he gave liberty to the *Jews* to return to their own land, when he had knowledge of the prophecy of *Iſaiah* concerning himſelf; and beſides, why may he not be thought to know the *Hebrew* character alſo as well as the *Chaldee*, ſuppoſing them different? he was a very enterpriſing prince and had conquered many nations, and might be maſter of many languages, as *Mithridates* king of *Pontus* was, and eſpecially of the *Hebrew*, if what is ſaid by an *Arabic* writer [e] is true, that he married the ſiſter of *Zerubbabel*, and his mother alſo is ſaid † to be a *Jeweſs*; and after all, the whole depends upon the teſtimony of *Joſephus*,

[d] Cyropœdia, l. 7. c. 23. [e] Abulpharag. Hiſt. Dynaſt. dyn. 5. p. 82. † Hottinger. apud Pfeiffer. Theolog. Jud. Exercitat. 7. c. 1. th. 1.

*ſephus*, that he did read the prophecy of *Iſaiah*, who produces no authority for it; and if he did read it, it might be through an interpreter, or as tranſlated for him, ſuppoſing him ignorant of the *Hebrew* language and its character: and it can hardly be thought that when the ſame *Joſephus* ſays [f] that *Alexander* was ſhewn the prophecy in *Daniel* concerning himſelf, that he underſtood *Hebrew*, or the language in which it was written, but that it was read and interpreted to him. There is a paſſage I confeſs in *Joſephus* [a]; which makes the *Hebrew* and *Syriac* character very ſimilar; for according to him, *Demetrius* the librarian of *Ptolemy Philadelphus* told the king when he acquainted him with the Jewiſh writings, that their character was very much like to the *Syriac* letters, and were pronounced like to them; but according to *Ariſtæus* [b], and whoſe words are alſo preſerved in *Euſebius* [c], *Demetrius* ſaid very much the contrary; that the *Jews*, as the *Egyptians*, had a peculiar character, and a peculiar pronunciation; ſome think they uſed the *Syriac*, but it is not

[f] Antiqu. l. 11. c. 8. f. 5. [a] Antiqu. l. 12. c. 2. f. 1.
[b] Hiſt. 72. Interpr. p. 4. 5. [c] Præpar. Evangel. b. 8. c. 2. p. 350.

not ſo, ſays he, it is in another form and manner.

THUS have I traced the *Hebrew* letters and characters from the beginning of them to the times of *Ezra*, when the ſuppoſed change took place; what I undertook to ſhew was no more than that it is probable that the ancient letters of the Jews, and which they have always retained, are the ſquare letters, as they are commonly called, or thoſe in which the ſacred ſcriptures are now extant; and I think I have made it appear to be probable. I lay no ſtreſs on the pillars of *Seth*, nor the tables of *Cainan*, and the writing of *Enoch*, nor the letters of the law, and the fancies of the *Jews* about them and the manna, nor upon any inſcription on ſepulchral monuments; but I think it is probable, that as the firſt language men ſpoke and was after the confuſion of tongues called the *Hebrew* language, to diſtinguiſh it from others, if there were letters before that confuſion, as it ſeems reaſonable to ſuppoſe there were, they were ſuch as were proper and peculiar to it, and it is probable that they afterwards continued in it; and whereas the alphabet of the *Hebrew* language appears

pears to be the firſt of the *oriental* languages, from whence the reſt have the names, order, and number of their letters, it is probable, yea it ſeems more than probable, that the letters of the *Hebrew* alphabet were thoſe of the ſquare kind, ſince to them only the names of the letters in their ſignification correſpond: it is probable that the law of the ten commands, was written and given in thoſe characters, and not in the *Samaritan*; it is more probable the letters on the written mountains, ſuppoſed to be written by the *Iſraelites* in the wilderneſs, when encamped, and on their travels there, were of the ſame kind, rather than of the *Samaritan*, or any other; it is probable, that the letters on the plate of gold the high prieſt wore on his forehead were the ſame as now in uſe, and that *Moſes* wrote his *Pentateuch*, in the ſame character; that *Iſaiah* alſo wrote his prophecies in the ſame; and that the book of *Daniel*, and particularly the hand-writing that terrified *Belſhazzar*, were written in the ſame; nor is there any juſt reaſon to believe that the *Jews* ever had any other ſort of letters, nor that *Ezra* changed their ancient ones for thoſe; for, as has been already

obſerved, he never would have done it without a divine command, which it does not appear he had; and if he would have done it, and had had ever ſuch an inclination to it, he never could have done it; nor is it credible that the Jews in *Babylon* ſo forgot their language, and their letters, as to make ſuch a change neceſſary, which is ſuggeſted*. Can it be thought that the men who remembered the firſt temple in its glory, and wept at laying the foundation of the ſecond, *Ezra* iii. 12. ſhould forget their language and the *alphabet* of it, when the greater part were only fifty-two years there? for the ſeventy years are to be reckoned from the fourth of *Jehoiakim*, eighteen years before the deſtruction of the city and temple by *Nebuchadnezzar*, and their being carried captive by him into *Babylon*; where they lived together in bodies, did not mix with the *Chaldæans*, nor intermarry with them, and converſed together in their own language, had their ſacred books in it to read, held a correſpondence with *Jeremiah* by letters, at the firſt of the captivity, and had the miniſtry and ſermons of *Ezekiel* to attend upon in it *Ezek.* i. 1, and iii. 15, and xxx. 30, 33.



* Eliæ Præfat. Methurgeman.

*Jer.* xxix. 1, 25, 31. nor is it true that their language was corrupted in *Babylon*; the captives that returned ſpoke the language of the Jews purely, only the children of ſome few, whoſe fathers had married wives, not in *Babylon*, but women of *Aſhdod*, *Ammon*, and *Moab*, after the return from the captivity, who ſpoke half in the language of thoſe people, for which *Nehemiah* reproved them; and this ſhews it was not a general thing: and certain it is that the prophets *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, and *Malachi* wrote in pure *Hebrew*, as it was in the days of *Moſes*; the ſame roots, prefixes, ſuffixes, idioms, conſtructions, and terminations, are to be obſerved in them as in the *Pentateuch* of *Moſes*. Upon the whole, the Jews certainly ſpoke the *Hebrew* language after their return from the captivity, and ſome when they came back to *Perſia* again, in *Nehemiah*'s time; nor had he forgot it, nor diſuſed it, for walking before *Suſa*, the chief city of *Perſia*, as *Joſephus* * relates, he overheard ſome ſtrangers lately come from *Jeruſalem* diſcourſing together in the *Hebrew* tongue, and underſtanding them, he aſked

* Antiqu. l. xi. c. 5. ſ. 6.

aſked the queſtions as in *Neh.* i. 2. he himſelf wrote in *Hebrew*, as did *Ezra*, not only his own book, but the books of *Chronicles*, as is ſuppoſed; yea, ſome of the *Pſalms* were written after the return from the captivity, as *Pſ.* cxxvi. cxxxvii. and even as late as the times of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, and all in pure *Hebrew*. *Daniel* in the captivity wrote in *Hebrew*, excepting what concerned the *Chaldæans*; and ſo did *Ezekiel*. The book of *Eſther*, ſuppoſed to be written by *Mordecai*, was written in pure *Hebrew*; and if *Ahaſuerus* was *Xerxes*, it muſt be written many years after the captivity; and in his time, *Pſ.* lxxxviii. is by ſome thought to be written. It is the nature and glory of the *Hebrew* language to have been always conſtant and invariable, and ſo it is probable its letters were; the Jews glory in their ſacred writings, that no innovation was ever made in them. *Joſephus* [z] ſays, "it is manifeſt in fact in what "veneration and credit we have our letters or books; for though ſo many ages "are paſt, (as almoſt 3000 years, as he "ſays) yet no man has dared to add any "thing to them, nor to take any thing

 "from

[z] Cont. Apion. l. 1. ſ 8.

" from them, nor to change them :" it is plain from hence, that this hiſtorian knew nothing of the change of the letters of the ſacred writings made by *Ezra*, which muſt be an innovation in them. *Philo* the *Jew* [h], ſays " our law only is firm, " unmoveable, unſhaken, ſealed as it were " with the ſeals of nature; it remains " firmly from the time it was written, " until now; and it is to be hoped it will " remain immortal throughout all ages, " as long as do the ſun and moon, the " whole heaven, and the world." The eighth article of the *Jewiſh* creed runs thus: * " I believe with a perfect faith, i. e. " ſincerely, that the whole law which is " now in our hands, is that which was " given to *Moſes* our maſter, on whom be " peace, without any change and altera- " tion;" but we have a greater teſtimony than theſe, of the unalterableneſs of the law, and even of the letters in which it was written, the words of *Chriſt* in Matt. v. 18. *for verily I ſay unto you, 'till heaven and earth paſs away, one jot or one tittle ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the law, till all be fulfilled;*

[h] De vita Moſis l. 2. 656. * Seder Tephillah, fol. 86. 2. Abarbinel. Præfat. in Jer.

*fulfilled*; which though it is not to be underſtood of the bare letter *Yod*, which as it is ſometimes redundant, ſo in ſome places wanting, as in 1 *Sam.* xxi. 2. 2 *Sam.* xvi. 23. and xxi. 8. *Nehemiah* xii. 46. and though it is a proverbial expreſſion, ſignifying the unchangeableneſs and unalterableneſs of the law, with reſpect to the leaſt precept in it; yet it is founded upon, and is an alluſion to the writing of the law, and the letters of it; not to any copy of it in any language whatever; but to the original writing of it, and its letters, in which it had continued unto his time, and in which the *Iota* or *Yod* is the leaſt of the letters; and therefore could have no reſpect to the *Samaritan* copy of the law, in which language it is not the leaſt letter, but a very large one; which has beſides the ſtroke above, three large prongs, deſcending from it, each of which is as large again as the *Hebrew Yod*; which is ſo ſmall, that *Irenæus* [1] calls it half a letter; and to which our Lord manifeſtly refers: and this makes it at leaſt highly probable, that the law was originally written not in the *Samaritan*, but in the ſquare *Hebrew*

 letters,

[1] Adv. Hæreſ. l. 2. c. 41.

letters, which had unalterably remained unto the times of *Chriſt;* all which make it greatly probable, that the Jews only had one ſort of letters, which always remained with them, and are what are extant to this day.

*Bianconi*[k], the learned writer before-mentioned, is quite clear in it, that the *Hebrew* letters were never changed by *Ezra*, nor by any public authority; and which he judges improbable, ſince neither he nor *Joſephus* make mention of any ſuch change; and from the great numbers of Jews left in the land at the captivity, and the return of multitudes from it; and from *Ezra*'s coming to them with a large number alſo, and that ſixty or eighty years after the return of the firſt; and from the prophecies of *Haggai* and *Zechariah*, and from the ſhekels in the times of the *Maccabees*, which ſuppoſing ſuch a change would have been not in the *Samaritan*, but in the ſquare character; and from the unlikelihood of a conquered people taking the characters of an enemy's language, and quitting their own, and that after they had been many years delivered from them. He

[k] De Antiqu. Liter. Heb. p. 18.—22, 25, 26.

He ſuppoſes, that the *Hebrews*, *Chaldæans*, *Phœnicians*, and *Samaritans*, had all the ſame characters originally, and that there was a change made among the Jews long after the times of *Ezra*, from the ancient character to the ſquare one; and that it began in the ſhekels, in the time of the *Maccabees*, in which he obſerved a mixture of the ancient and modern characters, and ſuppoſes, that by little and little the change was made, from frequent tranſcribing the Bible, and daily writing; and that the modern letters were gradually formed from uſe, and the ſwift manner of writing, and for the convenience of it: but it does not ſeem probable that a character ſhould be mended through ſwiftneſs of writing, and that ſuch a grand, majeſtic, regular, and well-formed character, as the ſquare letter is, ſhould be produced in that way; but rather that the ill-ſhaped, ragged, rough, and deformed *Samaritan* character, ſhould ſpring from thence; and which ſeems to be the fact, but not ſo late as the times of the *Maccabees*; but as early as the diviſion and diſperſion of the nations, in the times of *Peleg*; ſo *Gaffarellus* * ob-

 ſerves,

* Unheard-of Curioſities, c. 13. ſ. 6. p. 405.

ſerves, that the *Samaritan* characters are corrupted from the *Hebrew*; and he adds, this is ſo certain a truth, as that it is a point of infinite perverſeneſs to offer to doubt of it. According to Dr. *Bernard*'s table of alphabets, called *Orbis eruditi Literatura a charactere Samaritico deducta*, it has been thought, that the letters of all nations muſt have ſprung from the *Samaritan* character; but this ſeems to depend much on fancy and imagination; and I am inclined to think, that all are deducible from the *Hebrew* ſquare character, the *Aſſyrian* firſt, then the *Phœnician*, from that the *Greek*, and ſo on; according to *Hermannus Hugo* [1], the *Hebrew* letters (the preſent ones) were the firſt; next ſprung from them the *Chaldæan* letters, which he ſays are ſcarce extant; then the *Aſſyrian*, or *Babylonian*, and the *Syriac*, or *Aramæan*, and from the *Syriac*, the *Samaritan*.

The principal argument by which the hypotheſis oppoſed, is ſupported, is taken from ſome coins or ſhekels, ſaid to be dug up in *Judea*, with theſe words on them, *Jeruſalem the holy*, and *the ſhekel of Iſrael*, the letters of which, it is aſſerted,

[1] De prima Scribendi orig. p. 54.

ſerted, agree, in form, with the *Samaritan*. Now as the *Samaritans*, becauſe of their averſion to the *Jews*, and the ten tribes after their ſeparation from the other two, had nothing to do with *Jeruſalem*, nor any eſteem for it, neither of them can be thought to ſtrike theſe pieces; and it is inferred from hence, that they muſt have belonged to the *Jews* before the captivity, and to the *Iſraelites* before the ſeparation of the ten tribes; and conſequently the *Samaritan* letters, ſuppoſed to be the ſame with thoſe on the coins, were the ancient *Hebrew* characters, and in which the books of the Old Teſtament were written; and this argument is thought to be unanſwerable: but it ſhould be obſerved, that the letters on the moſt unexceptionable of theſe coins differ conſiderably from thoſe in the *Samaritan Pentateuch*, and ſeem to reſemble, in ſome inſtances, the *Hebrew* almoſt as much as the *Samaritan*; and beſides the oldeſt of them do not precede the ſettlement of the high-prieſthood in the *Aſmonæan* family, and were not much above one hundred and fifty years before the æra of Chriſt, and ſome of them are later;

later [m]; to which may be added, there are coins, both ſilver and braſs, with inſcriptions in the ſquare character, which according to them are much more ancient than the other, and ſo prove the ſuperior antiquity of the ſquare character to that of the *Samaritan*. Rab. *Azariah* ſays [n], that he ſaw among ſome ancient coins at *Mantua*, a ſilver coin which had on one ſide of it the form of a man's head, and round about it, *King Solomon*, in the holy tongue, and ſquare writing, and on the other ſide the form of the temple, and round about it written *the temple of Solomon*; and *Hottinger* [o] affirms, he ſaw one of the ſame ſort in the collection of the Elector *Palatine*. The Jews in their *Talmud* [p], ſpeak of a *Jeruſalem* coin, which had *David* and *Solomon* on one ſide, and the words, *Jeruſalem, the holy city*, on the other ſide; and of a coin of *Abraham*'s, having on one ſide, the *Hebrew* words for *an old man* and *an old woman*, and on the other ſide, thoſe, for a *young man* and a *young woman*; and the learned *Chriſtopher Wagenſeil*

[m] See the Univerſal Hiſtory, vol. xvii. p. 302, 303, 304. [n] Meor Enayim, c. 58. fol. 174, 2. See fol. 54. [o] Præfat. ad Cippi Heb. p. 41. [p] T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 97, 2. vid. Waſer. de Num. antiqu. l. 2. c. 5.

*Wagenſeil* [q] aſſures us, he had both theſe coins in his own poſſeſſion, of which he gives the figures with the words on them, in the ſquare letters; beſides *Abraham*, the Jews * ſpeak of three more, that coined money, *Joſhua*, *David*, and *Mordecai*; the coin of *Joſhua* had on one ſide a bullock, and on the other, an unicorn. See *Deut.* xxxiii. 17. that of *David*'s had a ſtaff and ſcrip on one ſide, and a tower on the other; that of *Mordecai*'s had ſackcloth and aſhes on one ſide, and a crown of glory on the other; elſewhere † it is ſaid, it had *Mordecai* on one ſide, and *Eſther* on the other: there was alſo a coin of *Moſes*; I myſelf have ſeen a coin of his [r], having on one ſide, his face, with his ears horned, like rams horns, and underneath is the word משה, in ſquare characters, and on the other ſide, the firſt commandment, in the ſame character, לא יהיה לך *and thou ſhalt have no other God before me*; and which exactly agrees with one Mr. *Selden* [s] had in his poſſeſſion, found among ſome rubbiſh at *Shene* in *Surry*.

[q] Sotah, p. 574, 575. * Bereſhit Rabba, Paraſh. 39. fol. 34, 4. † Midraſh Eſther, fol. 95, 4. [r] Penes Mr. Richard Hall in Southwark. [s] De Jure Naturæ, l. 2. c. 6. p. 187.

*Surry.* It will be ſaid, theſe coins are ſpurious; the ſame may be, and is ſaid of thoſe that have the *Samaritan* characters on them; nor is there any reaſon to believe that thoſe ſhekels or coins which have on them, *Jeruſalem the holy*, and *the ſhekel of Iſrael*, are any of them indiſputably genuine. *Ottius* and *Reland*, who have applied themſelves cloſely to the ſtudy of thoſe coins, have as good as confeſſed it; and *Spanheim*, by what he has ſai , appears to be in a very great doubt about it[t]. The celebrated *Charles Patin*, ſo famous for his ſkill in coins and medals, and who had free acceſs to the cabinets of all the princes in *Europe*, declared many years ago to the learned *Chriſtopher Wagenſeil*[u] with great aſſurance, that he never found in thoſe collections, an *Hebrew* coin, but what was manifeſtly ſpurious: wherefore theſe coins are not to be depended on, nor can any ſufficient argument be drawn from them in favour of any hypotheſis. Moreover, it has been ſaid; that the ancient *Hebrew* or *Samaritan* characters, were given to the *Cuthites* or *Samaritans*, and left

[t] Univerſal Hiſtory, ut ſupra, p. 303. [u] Ut ſupra, p. 576.

left with them out of hatred to them, and that the ſquare letters in the times of *Ezra* were choſen, taken, and retained by the *Jews* for their uſe; but then how comes it to paſs that the *Samaritan* characters were re-aſſumed and inſcribed on the coins three hundred years after, namely, on thoſe of *Simon* the high prieſt, of *Jonathan* his brother, and of *John Hyrcanus*, his ſon, as the coins publiſhed by Mr. *Swinton* ſhew [w]? and by *John Hyrcanus*, the laſt of theſe, *Samaria* was deſtroyed, the temple in *Gerizzim* demoliſhed, after it had ſtood two hundred years, and the *Samaritans* made tributary to the *Jews*; and it is obſervable, that upon the coin of *Hyrcanus*, on one ſide are *Samaritan* letters, and on the other *Greek* letters, and which was uſual with the *Carthaginians*, *Syrians*, and *Sidonians*; and there is an inſtance of it in a coin of *Demetrius*: [x] and by the way, this furniſhes us with an anſwer to a queſtion of *Bianconi* [y], who aſks, why the *Maccabees* did not put *Greek* letters on their money, a well known cuſtom in that

[w] Differt. de Num. Samar. p. 46, 49, 61. [x] Montfaucon. Diar. Italic. p. 355. [y] De Antiqu. Liter. Heb. p 23, 24.

that age, and common to all the eaſt, for it ſeems he never ſaw any; and adds, that *Jewiſh* coins with two ſorts of letters were never ſeen. But to proceed; from the different letters on the coin of *Hyrcanus*, from the one, it can no more be inferred, that *Samaritan* letters were in uſe among the *Jews*, than that from the other, *Greek* letters were; and though I profeſs no ſkill in coins, I ſhould think that the reaſon of thoſe different characters were deſigned by *Hyrcanus* as an inſult on both people, and as a triumph over them, and to perpetuate the fame of his conqueſts both over the *Samaritans* and the *Greeks*, or *Syro Macedonians*: however, it appears, that from theſe coins no argument can be taken to ſupport the hypotheſis, that the ancient *Hebrew* characters were the *Samaritan*; and indeed it is entirely inconſiſtent with it; for how does it appear that thoſe letters were left to the *Samaritans*, and others taken by the *Jews*? and it is alſo clear that there is no neceſſity to give into the notion of a twofold character in uſe with the *Jews*, the one ſacred, in which their holy books were written, namely,

the ſquare character; and the other common, uſed in coins and civil affairs, as the *Samaritan*; to which ſome Jews [z] and chriſtians [a] ſeem to have been led by the above coins; for though the *Egyptians* [b] had their ſacred characters and their common ones, and ſo had the *Greeks* [c] yet not the *Jews*, whoſe prieſts had no juggling tricks to play, as the prieſts of *Egypt* and *Greece* had; and though ſome later *Jews* have given into the notion of a double character, as in uſe formerly, yet it is not mentioned in their ancient writings, as if they had one for the ſanctuary and ſacred uſes, and another for common uſe; the only place I have met with, that ſeems to favour it, is the *Targum* of *Jonathan*, on Gen. xxxii. 2. " and he called the name of the " place in the language of the holy houſe, " *Mahanaim*," which is not to be rendered the language of the houſe of the ſanctuary, or the temple, as by ſome, ſince that is uſually called, בית מקדש or מוקדשא, as in Gen. xxviii. 17, 22. and not בית קודשא as here;

[z] Maimon. & Bartenora in Miſn. Yadaim, c. 4. f. 5. [a] Vid. Buxtorf. de Lit. Heb. f. 45. [b] Herodot. Euterpe, ſive, l 2. c. 36. Diodor. Sicul. l. 1. p. 72. & l. 3. p. 144. Clement. Alex. Stromat. l. 5. p. 555. [c] Theodoret. in Gen. Quæſt. 60.

here; but the language of the holy houſe, or family, the people of God, that is, the *Hebrew* tongue; to which may be added, an ancient writer among the chriſtians, *Irenæus**, who ſays, that "the ancient and firſt letters of the *Hebrews*, and called *ſacerdotal*, are ten in number;" but that he means to diſtinguiſh them from any other letters or characters, uſed by the *Hebrews*, does not appear; beſides, he ſpeaks only of ten, and what he means is not eaſy to ſay; however, by them he cannot mean the *Samaritan* letters, becauſe among theſe letters he reckons the *Yod*, which he calls half a letter, which cannot agree with the *Samaritan Yod*, but does with that of the ſquare character.

* Adv. Hæreſ. l. 2. c. 41.

CHAP.

## CHAP. III.

*Concerning the Original of the* Samaritans, *their Language and Letters.*

HAVING, in the preceding Chapter, ſhewn that it is probable that the *Hebrews* always had the ſame letters, without any material change or alteration, and which have been retained by them, and are in uſe to this day; I ſhall endeavour, in this chapter, to make it appear as probable, that the *Samaritans* always had diſtinct letters from the *Jews*, and retained them; ſo that there never was any commutation of letters between them: and in order to ſet this in as clear a light as I can, it may be proper to enquire into the original of letters, and particularly of the *Samaritans*.

It is highly probable that there were letters before the flood, as already hinted, and ſo before the confuſion of tongues, which, as the firſt language they belonged to, were pure and uncorrupt, and the original of others; which firſt letters were the *Hebrew*, that

being the firſt tongue, as *Hermannus Hugo* [d] obſerves; nor, as he adds, did the figures of letters begin to differ before the diverſity of languages at *Babel*. But my enquiry is, concerning the firſt letters after the diviſion of tongues; and theſe are claimed by various nations: ſome ſay they were the invention of the *Egyptians*, others of the *Phœnicians*, and others of the *Chaldæans* [e]. Many aſcribe the invention of letters to the *Egyptians*, to the *Thoth*, *Taautus*, the *Mercury* of the *Egyptians*, as *Sanchoniatho* [f], *Gellius* [g], and others, as ſome in *Plato* *; but *Pliny* ſays [h] the *Phœnicians* bear away the glory of it; and if fame is to be credited, as *Lucan* [i] expreſſes it, they were the firſt that dared to mark words by figures. *Suidas* † aſcribes the invention of letters to them, and ſo does *Mela* [k]; but *Voſſius*, in his obſervations on him, is of opinion, that by letters he means numbers, and that *Arithmetic* and *Aſtronomy* were the invention of the *Phœnicians*,

[d] De prima Scribendi Orig. c. 3. p. 42, 43. [e] Theophilus ad Autolyc. l. 3. prope finem. [f] Apud Euſeb. Evangel. Præpar. l. 1. p. 31. [g] Apud Plin. Nat. Hiſt. l. 7. c. 56. * In Philebo, p. 374. & in Phædro, p. 1240. [h] Plin. l. 5. c. 12. [i] Phœnices primi, &c. Phar. ſal. l. 3. v. 220. So Critias, apud Athenæum, l. 1. c. 22. p. 28. † In voce γραμματα, and in Καδμος. [k] De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 12.

*nicians*, which need the aſſiſtance of numbers; and perhaps the true reaſon why letters have been thought to be found out by them is, becauſe they firſt brought them into *Greece*; but as Dr. *Cumberland*[1] remarks, the *Chaldæans* and *Aſſyrians* will not grant them this honour, but contend for an earlier invention of them, and that the inventors lived among them, and not in *Phœnicia*, nor in *Egypt*; and *Pliny*[m] is of opinion, that the *Aſſyrian* letters were always, or that the *Aſſyrians* always had letters; which he confirms by the teſtimonies of *Epigenes*, *Beroſus* and *Critodemus*, who ſay, they had obſervations of the ſtars inſcribed on bricks, for a long courſe of years paſt; as they might have from the beginning of their nation, or nearly, and which was very early: it was in their country the confuſion of tongues was made; and their language comes near to the *Hebrew*, the firſt and pure language, from which theirs is a deviation; and ſo their letters might be taken from theirs, though greatly corrupted. *Elias* * obſerves that the *Syrian* language is neareſt to the holy, or *Hebrew* language, of all languages; and quotes



[1] Sanchoniatho, p. 191. [m] Ut ſupra, l. 7. c. 56. * Præpar. ad Methurgeman.

*Aben Ezra* as of opinion that the *Syrian* language is no other than the holy tongue corrupted; which corruption *Elias* thinks took place after *Abraham* departed from *Chaldea*, though perhaps it might be ſooner; ſo *Ephrem Syrus*, who well underſtood that language, ſays *, that the *Syrian* language has an affinity with the *Hebrew*, and in ſome reſpects nearer reaches the ſenſe of the ſcriptures; and R. *David Ganz* † obſerves, that thoſe who were neareſt to the place where the confuſion was made, were purer and nearer to the holy tongue, as th *Syrians* and *Arabians*; the *Aſſyrian*, *Chaldee*, and *Syrian* language and letters were the ſame; and they are of great affinity, if not the ſame, with the old *Phœnician*, now called the *Samaritan*, as will be ſeen hereafter; and the ducts of their letters may well be thought to be had from the *Hebrew*; but as the *Aſſyrians* are the firſt the heathen writers had knowledge of, to them they impute the original of letters, as many do [n]. *Diodorus Siculus* [o] relates, that ſome ſay the *Syrians* (that is, the *Aſſyrians*)

* Apud Baſil. in Hexaëmeron, Homil. 2. † Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 4. 1. [n] Vide Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 30. [o] Bibliothec. l. 5. p. 340.

*ſyrians)* were the inventors of letters; and *Euſebius* alſo obſerves [p] the ſame, that ſome ſay, the *Syrians* firſt deviſed letters; and he ſeems willing to allow it, provided that by *Syrians* are meant *Hebrews*; but no doubt thoſe writers intended the *Syrians* or *Aſſyrians*, commonly ſo called: ſome, in *Clemens* of *Alexandria* [q], join the *Aſſyrians* and *Phœnicians* together, as the inventors of letters; but the real fact ſeems to be as follows:

THE *Phœnicians* received their letters from the *Aſſyrians* or *Syrians*, and not from the *Hebrews*, as ſome have thought; not from *Abraham* the anceſtor of them, who, according to *Suidas* [r], invented the holy letters and language, the knowledge of which he ſays, the *Hebrews* had, as being his diſciples and poſterity: that he invented the letters and language, may be doubted; but that he ſpoke it is not be queſtioned, ſince he was forty-eight years of age, when the confuſion of tongues was made, as before obſerved, and therefore ſpoke the pure language; yea, *Elias Levita* [s] ſays, it was clear to him that language was confounded immediately after he went



[p] Præpar. Evangel. ut ſupra. [q] Stromat. l. 1. p. 307.
[r] In voce Ἀβραάμ. [s] Præfat. ad Methurgeman.

from *Chaldea*, and that he and his anceſtors ſpoke the holy tongue as received from *Adam*, to *Noah*, which may be admitted; but it cannot by any means be admitted, that when he came among the *Canaanites*, that he either learned the primitive or *Hebrew* language from them, as ſome have fancied, which they neither had, nor he needed, ſince he ſpoke it before; or that he taught it them. *Eupolemus* and *Artapanus*, who ſay [t], that *Abraham* taught the *Phœnicians Aſtronomy*, yet don't pretend that he taught them letters; nor is there any foundation for the one or the other, ſince he choſe not to have ſuch a free converſation and ſociety with them as theſe required, who would not ſo much as bury his dead with them, nor ſuffer his ſon to intermarry with them; and the like precaution *Iſaac* his ſon took with reſpect to *Jacob*, who for ſome years was out of the land, and when he returned, was but a ſojourner in it, as his fathers had been; and after a while went down with his poſterity into *Egypt*, where they abode at leaſt two hundred years; and when they came from

[t] Apud Euſeb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c 17, 18.

from thence, and after forty years travel in the wilderneſs, and entered the land of *Canaan*, the inhabitants were either deſtroyed by them, or they fled before them, and even at the report of their coming*; and ſo had no time to learn a language of them, or receive letters from them. *Cadmus*, the *Phœnician*, whom *Iſocrates* † calls the *Sidonian*, is generally ſuppoſed to go from *Phœnicia* to *Greece*, in the times of *Joſhua*, whither he carried letters, and therefore muſt be poſſeſſed of them before *Joſhua* entered *Canaan*; he is ſaid to come to *Rhodes* in *Greece*, and at *Lindus* to offer to *Lindia Minerva* a braſs pot with *Phœnician* letters on it; and the huge ſerpents, who, upon his coming thither, are ſaid ‡ to waſte that country, ſeem to be no other than the *Hivites*, the ſame with the *Cadmonites*, Gen. xv. 19. which the word *Hivites* ſignifies, whom *Cadmus* brought with him thither. Others of the *Phœnicians* or *Canaanites* fled into *Africa* ᵗ, particularly the *Girgaſites*, as is aſſerted in the *Jeruſalem*



* Targum. in Cant. 3. 5. † Helenæ Laudat. in fine.
‡ Diodor. Sic. l. 5 p. 329. ᵗ T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 1.

*Talmud* [u], and is confirmed by *Procopius* [w], who ſays they came into *Numidia*, where they had a garriſon in the place where in his time was the city of *Tingis* (now called *Tangier*), where they erected two pillars of white ſtone, then in being, A. D. 540, which he himſelf ſaw and read, on which in *Phœnician* letters were written, "we "are they that fled from the face of *Jeſus*, "(or *Joſhua*) the robber, the ſon of *Nave* "(or *Nun*)." *Suidas* * ſays, it was written, we are the *Canaanites*; which is a full proof they had letters before the times of *Joſhua*, and did not learn them of the *Iſraelites* when they came into *Canaan*; beſides, it is clear from the ſcriptures alſo, that they had letters before that time, as appears from the names of ſome cities among them, particularly *Debir*, which in the *Perſian* language, as *Kimchi* [x] from the *Rabbins* ſays, ſignifies a book; and which place was alſo called *Kirjath-ſannah*, and *Kirjath-ſepher*, which ſignify, that it was a city where either there was an academy for the inſtruction

[u] T. Hieroſ. Sheviith, fol. 37. 3. [w] Vandalic. l. 2. p. 135. apud Prideaux. Not. ad Marmor. Arundel. Tingit. p. 139, 140. Evagrii Eccleſ. Hiſt. l. 4. c. 18. * In voce χανααν, ſo Athanaſius, contr. Gentes, p. 16. [x] Comment. in Jud. 1, 1. T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 24. 2.

ſtruction of perſons, or a library of books, or where the archives of the country were kept, a city of Archives, as the *Targum*, which ſuppoſes letters; and the *Septuagint* render it a city of letters, *Joſh.* xv. 49. from all which it ſeems plain, that the *Phœnicians* or *Canaanites* did not receive letters from the *Hebrews*, but rather from the *Aſſyrians* or *Syrians*.

The *Aſſyrians* or *Syrians*, though they may be diſtinguiſhed, the one having their name from *Aſhur*, a ſon of *Shem*, and the other from *Aram*, a younger ſon of his, *Gen.* x. 22. hence they are called in *Strabo* [y] *Aramæans* or *Arimei*; and in the times of *Ahaz* king of *Judah* there were both a king of *Aſſyria*, and a king of *Syria*, yet theſe two names are often confounded, and indifferently uſed by the ancients, as if the ſame people, *Syria* being commonly thought to be a contraction of *Aſſyria* [z]; ſo *Lucian* of *Samoſata* in *Syria*, calls himſelf an *Aſſyrian* [a], and on the other hand, *Tatian* the *Aſſyrian*, is called by *Clemens* of *Alexandria* [b], a *Syrian*; theſe countries being contiguous, yea, the one a part of the other,

[y] Geograph. l. 16. p. 540. [z] Univerſal Hiſtory, vol. 2. p. 255. [a] De Dea Syriæ, p, 1. [b] Stromat. l. 3. p. 460.

other, they may very well be called the one and the other; the *Syrians*, according to *Suidas* *, have their name from the *Assyrians*; hence *Isidore* [c] says, whom the ancients called *Assyrians* we call *Syrians*; so *Justin* [d] remarks, that the *Assyrians*, who were afterwards called *Syrians*, held the empire three hundred years; and the same people who, according to *Herodotus* [e], were by the *Greeks* called *Syrians*, are by the *Barbarians* called *Assyrians*, among whom were the *Chaldeans*; and *Strabo* observes [f], that *Semiramis* and *Ninus* were called *Syrians*, by the one *Babylon* the royal city was built, and by the other *Nineveh*, the metropolis of *Assyria*; and that the same language was used both without and within the *Euphrates*, that is, by the *Syrians* strictly so called, and by the *Babylonians* or *Chaldæans*: and it need not seem strange that the *Phœnicians* should receive their letters from these people, since they were their neighbours, and lived so near them. *Herodotus* [g] speaks of them as springing out of *Syria*, and dwelling in *Syria*, and of *Phœ-*

* In voce Ασσυριοι. [c] Orig. l. 9. c. 2. [d] A Trogo l. 1. c. 2. [e] Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 63. [f] Geograph. l. 2. p. 58. [g] Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 105. & Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 116.

*Phœnicians* and *Syrians* as together in *Paleſtine* [h]. *Phœnicia* is often deſcribed as included in *Syria*, and as a part of it; ſo *Diodorus Siculus* [i], ſpeaking of *Cœle-Syria*, adds, in which *Phœnicia* is comprehended; and *Strabo* [k] ſays, ſome divide all *Syria* into *Cœle-Syrians* and *Phœnicians*; and *Clemens* of *Alexandria* [l] calls *Phœnicia*, *Phœnicia* of the *Syrians*; and *Iſidore* [m] obſerves, that *Syria* has in it, the provinces *Comagene*, *Phœnicia*, and *Paleſtine*; ſo *Pliny* [n]: *Philo* * the *Jew* aſſerts, that *Phœnicia*, *Cœle-Syria*, and *Paleſtine*, went by the common name of *Canaan* in the times of *Moſes*; and the *Phœnicians* and *Aſſyrians* are reckoned as one by *Macrobius* [o]; with all which agree ſome paſſages of ſcripture; the woman of *Canaan*, in *Mat.* xv. 22. is called a *Syro-Phœnician* in *Mark* vii. 26. ſo the diſciples are ſaid to ſail into *Syria*, and land at *Tyre* the chief city in *Phœnicia*, *Acts* xxi. 3. and as their country was much the ſame, ſo their manners; hence the proverb [p], "the *Syrians* againſt the

[h] Euterpe, ſive, l. 2. c. 104. & l. 4. c. 89. [i] Bibliothec. l. 18. p. 591. [k] Geograph. l. 16. p. 515. [l] Admon. ad Græc. p. 25. [m] Orig. l. 14. c. 3. [n] Nat. Hiſt. l. 5. c. 12. * De vita Moſis l. 1. p. 627. [o] Saturnal. l. 1. c. 21. [p] Vid. Suidam in voce συροι, & Reineſ. de Ling. Punic. p. 11.

the *Phœnicians*," ſignifying, their being alike as to temper and behaviour; their religion and deities were the ſame; the rites of *Adonis* were common to them both; *Adad*, the god of the *Aſſyrians* [q], is the ſame with the *Adodus* of the *Phœnicians* *; ſo that, all things conſidered, it may well be thought they had the ſame language and letters, or nearly the ſame. *Annius* of *Viterbo* affirms [a], that the ancient *Aſſyrian* and *Phœnician* letters were the ſame, who certainly was a man of learning, for the times he lived in, and very inquiſitive, however culpable he might be in publiſhing ſome fragments as genuine, thought to be ſpurious; on which account perhaps he has been a little too ſeverely treated by critics, as Dr. *Clayton* late biſhop of *Clogher* has obſerved [b]; and who is of opinion, that his fragment of *Beroſus*, ſo much complained of, ought not to be entirely rejected as ſpurious; and the ſame writer ſays [c], that the firſt *Phœnix*, from whom the *Phœnicians* had their name, and the firſt *Cadmus* from whom the

[q] Macrob. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 24. * Sanchoniatho apud Euſeb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 2. p. 38. [a] Comment. in Xenophon. de Æquivocis, p. 118. [b] Introduct. Chronolog. Heb. Bible, p. 19—22. [c] Annii Comment. in Manethon. Supplement. p. 97.

the *Greeks* had their letters, ſprung from *Syria*; which *Phœnix*, who is ſaid by him to reign in *Sidon*, according to *Sanchoniatho* [d], was no other than *Canaan* the ſon of *Ham*; for he ſays, that "one of theſe (the *Phœnicians*) *Iſiris* was the inventor of three letters, the brother of *Chna* (or *Canaan*) who was firſt called *Phœnix*."

The old *Canaanitiſh* or *Phœnician* language, and alſo the *Punic*, were the ſame; hence *Auſtin* [e] ſays, that the country-people living near him, who were a colony of the *Phœnicians*, when aſked who they were, uſed to anſwer, in the *Punic* language, *Chanani*, *Canaanites*. Now, though this language was near the *Hebrew* language, ſo that the *Hebrews* and *Canaanites* could converſe together as to underſtand one another, which appears from *Abraham*'s converſation with them, *Gen.* xiv. 18.—24. and xxiii. 3.—16. and from the converſation of the *Hebrew* ſpies with *Rahab* the *Canaanite*, *Joſh.* ii. 9—21. and from the names the *Canaanites* impoſed on their cities before they came into the hands of

[d] Apud Euſeb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 2. c. 10. p. 39. [e] Expoſ. Rom. Tom. 7. p. 363.

of the *Hebrews*, as is evident from the books of *Joſhua* and *Judges*, unleſs thoſe names were given them by *Eber* and his ſons, who dwelt here before the *Canaanites*, as Dr. *Lightfoot* [s] ſuggeſts; yet the language was not altogether the ſame, it differed much, and eſpecially in after-times, and particularly in their colonies, where it had the name of the *Punic*. *Auſtin* [t] having remarked, that the *Hebrews* call *Chriſt Meſſiah*, obſerves, that "the word agrees "with the *Punic* language, as very many "*Hebrew* words, and *almoſt all* do;" which may be true of proper names in particular, but not of words in general. St. *Jerom*, who underſtood the *Hebrew* language better than *Auſtin*, affirms, that the *Canaanitiſh* or *Punic* language was bordering near unto the *Hebrew* *, and in a great part near unto it [u]; he does not ſay, as *Fuller* [w] obſerves, in the greateſt part, nor almoſt in every part, and ſtill leſs in every part, but in a great part; and ſo *Origen* [x] aſſerts, that the

[s] Works, vol. 2. p. 327. [t] Contr. Petil. l. 2. p. 123. Tom. 7. vid. Reineſ. de Ling. Punic. c. 4. ſ. 4. p. 20.
* Trad. Heb. in Gen. fol. 71, M. [u] Comment. in Iſaiam, c. 19. fol. 42. C. & in Hierem. c. 25. fol. 51. B. Tom. 5. [w] Miſcellan. Sacr. l. 4. c. 4. [x] Contr. Celſum, l. 3. p. 115.

the *Hebrew* language differs both from the *Syrian* and the *Phœnician*. *Jerom* in one place [y] ſays, that the *Canaanitiſh* or *Punic* language is a middle language between the *Egyptian* and the *Hebrew*. *Salmaſius* [z] ſuggeſts as if ſome thought that the *Punic* and *Egyptian* languages were the ſame; which can by no means be admitted.

It ſeems moſt probable what *Jerom* elſewhere [a] obſerves, that the *Canaanitiſh* or *Phœnician* language is the *Syrian*, or nearly that; and *Auſtin* [b] affirms, that the *Hebrew*, *Punic*, and *Syrian* languages are very near a-kin; and moſt of the words which he makes mention of as *Punic*, are plainly *Chaldee* or *Syriac*; ſo *mammon*, he ſays [c], is the word for gain, in the *Punic* language, and is the *Syriac* word uſed for riches in the time of Chriſt, *Luke* xvi. 9. hence with the *Phœnicians* is the name of a man *Abdamamon* [d], which ſignifies a ſervant of *mammon*, riches wealth, or gain. ſee *Mat.* vi. 24. ſo he ſays [e] blood, in the *Punic* language is called *Edom*; now in the

[y] In Iſaiam, ut ſupra. [z] Not. in pallium Tertull. p. 205. [a] In Iſaiam, ut ſupra. [b] In Ioannem, Tr. 15. p. 58. Tom. 9. [c] De Sermon. Dom. l. 2. p. 352. Tom. 4. [d] Vid. Swinton. Inſcript. Cit. p. 21. [e] Enarrat. in Pſ. 136. p. 646. B.

the *Hebrew* tongue it is *Dam*; but in the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* tongue, it is, אדם, or אידם, which are frequently uſed in the *Chaldee* paraphraſes: he alſo obſerves [f] *Baal* in the *Punic* tongue, ſignifies Lord, and *Samen* heaven, and both together, Lord of heaven, which with *Sanchoniatho* [g] a *Phœnician* writer, is a deity of the *Phœnicians*; and ſo *Balſamen* in the *Pœnulus* of *Plautus* [h], is manifeſtly of a *Chaldee* or *Syriac* termination: the above *Phœnician* writer [i] ſpeaks of a ſort of intelligible animals, whom he calls *Zophaſemin*, and which *Philo Byblius*, who tranſlated his work out of the *Phœnician* language into *Greek*, interprets ſeers, or contemplators of the heavens, which word alſo, is plainly in the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* dialect; and *Kircher* [k] affirms, that he had in his poſſeſſion a fragment of *Sanchoniatho*, written in the *Aramæan* or *Syrian* language. The *Malteſe*, or the inhabitants of the iſland called *Melita*, *Acts* xxviii. 1. a colony of the *Phœnicians* as *Diodorus Siculus* [l] affirms,

[f] Quæſt. ſuper Jud. l. 7. p. 130. B. Tom. 4. [g] Apud Euſeb. Præpar. l. 2. p. 34. [h] Act. 5. ſc. 2. v. 67. [i] Apud Euſeb. l. 2. p. 33. [k] Obeliſc Pamphil. p. 111. apud Fabritii Biblioth. Gr. Tom 1. p. 164. [l] Bibliothec. l. 5. p. 294.

firms, have in their language a great deal of the old *Phœnician* or *Punic* unto this day; and it is obſervable, that their numerals from two to eleven, end in *a*, and from twenty to an hundred, in *in* [m]; which are exactly the terminations of the ſame numbers in the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* dialect. The *Carthaginians* were another colony of the *Phœnicians*, and the old name of the city of *Carthage* was *Cartheda*; which, as *Solinus* [n] ſays, in the *Phœnician* language, ſignifies the *new city*, being compoſed of קרתא *Kartha* a city, and חרתא *new*, which are both *Chaldee* words. There was a city in *Canaan*, or old *Phœnicia*, called *Hadattah*, or *Hazor-Hadattah*, *New Hazor*, *Joſh.* xv. 25. and another city there is called *Kerioth*: another name of *Carthage* we meet with in *Plautus* [o], appears to be of *Phœnician* original, *Chadreanac*, the chambers, lodging, or ſeat of *Anak*, that is, the *Anakim*, ſuch as were in old *Canaan*; though, according to Dr. *Hyde* [p], the word ſignifies, as he conjectures, the *new city* alſo: and *Bochart* [q] has

I obſerved

[m] See Univerſal Hiſtory, vol. 17. p. 299. [n] Polyhiſt. c. 40. So Iſidor. Orig. l. 14. c. 14. [o] Pœnulus, Act. 5. ſc. 2. v. 35. [p] Not. in Peritzol. Itinerar. Mundi, p. 44. [q] Canaan. l. 2. c. 6.

obſerved many words in the *Punic* of *Plautus*, which are in the *Syrian* dialect; and there are ſeveral words in different authors ſaid to be *Punic* or *Phœnician*, which are manifeſtly *Chaldee* or *Syriac*. *Plutarch* ſays [r], the *Phœnicians* call an ox *Thor*, which is the word uſed in *Chaldee* for it. *Jonah*'s gourd, according to *Jerom* [s], was called *Elkeroa* in the *Syriac* and *Punic* language, as if they were the ſame. *Sanctius* [t] obſerves, that in *Spain* a garden is called by a *Punic* name *Carmen*, which ſignifies a vineyard, though ſet with other trees; which *Punic* word, he makes no doubt (as he need not) comes from the *Hebrew* word *Cerem*, a vineyard, and which in the *Chaldee* language in the plural number is *Cermin*; and *Charmis* * is the name of a city given by the *Phœnicians*, becauſe of the multitude of vines about it. *Iſidore* [u], ſays the *Phœnicians* call a new village *Magar*; the word is uſed by *Plautus* in his *Pœnulus* [w], where it ſignifies a place in *Carthage*, ſome public building there,

[r] Opera, vol. 1. Vit. Syllæ, p. 463. [s] Comment. in Ionam, c. 4. fol. 59. B. [t] Comment. in Cantic. 1. 6. p. 58. * Stephan. de urb. [u] Orig. l. 15. c. 12. ſo Servius in Virgil. Æneid. lib. 1. v. 369. [w] Prolog. v. 86. vid. Philip. Pareum in Ib. & Lexic. Plautin.

there, and it is the ſame with the *Syriac* word *Magar*, which ſignifies an habitation; ſo *Anna* in *Virgil* [x], the ſiſter of *Dido*, or *Eliſa*, who were both *Phœnicians*, and daughters of *Pygmalion* king of *Tyre*, is the *Syriac* name for *Hannah*. See *Luke* ii. 36. *Gades* or *Cadiz*, corruptly called *Cales*, which belongs to *Spain*, the *Phœnicians* called *Gadir* or *Gadira*, which in the *Punic* language ſignifies an hedge, as is obſerved by many [y], and ſo it does in *Chaldee*; the reaſon of which name is, becauſe that place was hedged about on all ſides by the ſea: the *Syriac* word *Korban*, uſed by the *Jews* in Chriſt's time for an oath, *Mark* vii. 11. is ſaid by *Theophraſtus* [z] to ſignify the ſame in the *Punic* language; and *Lachman* is uſed by *Athenæus* [a] for bread, which the *Syrians* ſo call, and which in *Syria* is the beſt bread; and by the *Syrians* and *Syria*, he means *Phœnicians* and *Phœnicia*, where it ſeems it was ſo called, and is manifeſtly a *Chaldee* word; as is the word *Nabla*, the name of a muſical in-

 ſtrument,

[x] Æneid. l. 4. v. 9. & paſſim. [y] Feſtus Avienus in Ora Maritim. l. 1. Solinus, c. 36. Plin. Nat. Hiſt. l. 4. c. 22. Iſidor. Orig. l. 14. c. 6. [z] Apud Joſeph. contr. Apion. l. 1. ſ. 22. [a] Deipnoſophiſt. l. 3. c. 29. p. 113.

ſtrument, ſaid by him * to be an invention of the *Phœnicians*; as *Sambuca* is of the *Syrians*, called the *Phœnician* lyre, the ſame with the *Chaldee Sabbeca*, *Dan.* iii. 5. there rendered *ſackbut*. *Pauſanias* † uſes this as a proof that *Cadmus* was not an *Egyptian*, but a *Phœnician*; becauſe *Minervæ* is not called by the *Egyptian* word *Sais*, but by the *Phœnician* word *Siga*, which comes from the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* word סגא to increaſe or be increaſed; from all which it appears, that the *Chaldee* or *Syrian* language and the *Phœnician* are nearly the ſame, and ſo the letters may be ſuppoſed to be.

Let it be further obſerved, that the *Greeks* had their letters from the *Phœnicians*, at leaſt ſixteen or ſeventeen of them, [b] which *Cadmus*, ſome ſay *Linus* ‡, brought out of *Phœnicia* into *Greece*; which, without mentioning their number, is aſſerted by *Herodotus* [c], who ſays, they were called *Cadmeian* and *Phœnician* letters, and that he ſaw ſome of them at *Thebes* in *Bœotia*, engraved on ſome *Tripods* there, and that they were

* Ib. l. 4. c 23. p. 175. † Bœotica, ſive, l. 9. p. 560. [b] Plin. l. 7. c. 7. c. 56. Irenæus adv. Hareſ. l. 1. c. 12. Iſidor. Orig. l. 1. c. 3. ‡ Suidas in voce Λινος. [c] Terpſichore, ſive, l. 5. c. 58. 59.

were greatly like the *Ionic* letters; the ſame ſays *Diodorus Siculus* of the original and names of thoſe letters, and relates [d], that the braſs pot *Cadmus* offered to *Minerva Lindia*, had an inſcription of *Phœnician* letters on it: the *Greeks* therefore, themſelves, acknowledge, that they had their letters from the *Phœnicians*, as the above writers affirm, and ſo *Euphorus* [e], *Zenodotus* [f], and others; hence *Joſephus* [g] obſerves, that they glory in it, that they received them from them; ſo that this is a matter out of queſtion: and *Bianconi* [h] is of opinion, that the ancient *Greeks* uſed the very letters of the *Phœnicians*; and indeed this ſeems to be the meaning of *Herodotus*, in the place before referred to; and *Dictys Cretenſis* is ſaid [i] to have written his hiſtory of the *Trojan* wars, in the *Greek* language, but in *Phœnician* letters; and ſo *Linus* and *Orpheus* wrote in the letters of the *Pelaſgi*, the ſame with the *Phœnician*, as ſays * *Diodorus*; and the *Greeks* formerly wrote as the *Phœnicians* did, from



[d] Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 328, 329, 340. [e] Apud Clem. Alex. Stromat. l. 1. p. 306. [f] In Laert. vit. Philoſoph. l. 7. p. 455. [g] Contr. Apion. l. 1. ſ. 2. [h] De Antiqu. Liter. Heb. p. 59. [i] Vid. Fabritii Bibliothec. Gr. l. 1. c. 5. ſ. 10. p. 33 * Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 200, 201.

the right to the left, for in this form was the name of *Agamemnon* written, on his ſtatue at *Olympia* [b]; and thus wrote the *Etruſci*, who had their letters from the *Greeks* †, whoſe ancient language was the *Aramæan* or *Syrian* ‡; which way of writing by the *Greeks*, was gradually by little and little diſuſed, and iſſued in a form like that of the ploughing of oxen, called βουστροφηδον, in which manner the laws of *Solon* were written, as appears from *Suidas* [c] and *Harpocratian* [d]; that is alternately, from the right to the left. Now as the *Greeks* received their letters from the *Phœnicians*, and there is a ſimilarity of the letters of the one to thoſe of the other, as it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe there ſhould, and as *Herodotus*, upon his own ſight, affirms there was, as before obſerved, nay, were the ſame; ſo there is a great likeneſs between the *Greek* and the preſent *Samaritan* letters; as the *Samaritans* wrote from the right hand towards the left, if the poſition of the *Samaritan* letters be inverted for that pur-

[b] Pauſan. Eliac. 1. ſive l. 5. p. 338. † Vid. Dickinſon. Delphi Phœnic. c. 10 & Reineſium de lingua, Punica, c. 12. ſ. 30. ‡ Reineſ. Ib. c. 2. ſ. 16. [c] In voce νομος. [d] In Οκταωδεν.

purpoſe, as Mr. *Bedford* remarks [k], the letters will appear to be the ſame; or, however, very much alike: the uſe to be made of this will ſoon and eaſily be perceived; for, as *Bochart* [l] reaſons, this being the caſe, it follows that the *Samaritan* characters are the very ſame which were uſed in *Phœnicia* in the times of *Cadmus*; and it is acknowledged by many learned men, that the letters or characters of the ancient *Canaanites*, that is, the *Phœnicians*, were either the ſame with, or very like to the *Samaritan* characters [m], or that the old *Phœnician* letters, and the *Samaritan* are very ſimilar, and nearly the ſame, ſo that they may be reckoned the ſame [n]; and whereas the *Phœnicians* received their letters from the *Aſſyrians*, or *Chaldeans*, it follows that the *Samaritan* letters being ſo like the *Phœnician*, muſt be the ſame, or near the ſame, with the old *Aſſyrian* and *Chaldean* characters; and that the people who are properly called *Samaritans*, had both their language and their letters from the *Chaldeans* or *Syrians*, will

 highly

[k] Chronology, p. 479. [l] Ep. Voſſio col. 859. [m] Univerſal Hiſtory, vol. 2. p. 347. [n] Bochart. Canaan l. 1. c. 20. col. 451. Dr. Kennicott. Diſſert. 2. p. 151. 156.

appear probable from the original of them, next to be conſidered.

It is amazing to me, that ſome learned men ſhould make the ten tribes of *Iſrael* that revolted under *Jeroboam*, the original of the *Samaritans*. *Samaria* indeed was built in the times of *Omri*, a ſucceſſor of his, and not before, and by him, between whom and *Jeroboam*, reigned *Nadab*, *Baaſha*, *Elah* and *Zimri*, and this city alſo became the metropolis of the ten tribes, and was inhabited only by *Iſraelites*, tho' never from hence were called *Samaritans*, but *Iſrael* or *Ephraim*; nor had they any more connexion with the people after called *Samaritans* than with the *Scythians* and *Tartars*; for it was not till after the *Iſraelites* were carried captive into *Aſſyria*, that thoſe, after called *Samaritans*, were ſent as a colony from thence to repeople *Samaria*, which was entirely ſtripped of its inhabitants by the king of *Aſſyria*; nor does it appear that thoſe who were left in the land of *Iſrael* had any ſociety with this new colony, or mixed with 'em, either in civil or religious things, but returned, at leaſt, many of them, to the pure worſhip of God, and joined with the tribe

tribe of *Judah*, and put themſelves under the government of the kings of it, and went with that tribe captive into *Babylon*. Nor is it clear that either thoſe of the ten tribes, or thoſe of the two tribes, had any thing to do with theſe *Samaritans*, for three hundred years after their firſt ſettlement in *Samaria*, nor they with them; even until they were joined by ſome renegado *Jews* in the times of *Manaſſeh* the prieſt, for whom a temple was built in *Gerrizzim* by *Sanballat*; the only inſtance is of the prieſt ſent from *Aſſyria* to teach them the worſhip of the God of the land, which they very coolly and hypocritically received, ſtill continuing in the idolatry they brought with them, and in which they continued to the times of *Ezra*, 2 *Kings*, xvii. 27, 28, 29, 33, 44. on which account the *Iſraelites* that were left in the land were obliged to keep at a diſtance from them, even when they firſt came among them, for had they joined them, it may reaſonably be thought, there would have been a prieſt, who, though of *Jeroboam*'s religion, could have inſtructed them as well as the prieſt ſent from among the captives in *Aſſyria*, who alſo muſt have been

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been of the same sort: now, either there were no priests left in the land, or, if there were, they had not joined the *Samaritans*, and though they had officiated in *Jeroboam*'s idolatry, did not chuse to join them in theirs; and certain it is, that in the times of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, the *Jews* would have nothing to do with the *Samaritans*, especially in religious things, *Ezra* iv. 1, 2, 3. *Nehemiah* ii. 20. and though under the influence of *Sanballat* their governor, they received the renegado *Jews* with his son-in-law *Manasseh* at the head of them, it does not appear that they cordially embraced them, since in any time of trouble the *Jews* were in, they did not care to own they had any connexion with them; so in the times of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, by whom the *Jews* were greatly distressed, they wrote unto him, and desired they might not be considered as of the same religion with the *Jews*, and be involved with them in the same distress; since, though their ancestors had been forced into a compliance with some parts of their worship, yet they assured him they were different from them, both in their manners or customs, and in their original;

original; and, whereas they had built an altar on mount *Gerizzim*, not dedicated to any deity, they desired it might, for the future be called the temple of the *Grecian Jupiter* [n]; though, at other times, when the circumstances of the *Jews* were more favourable, then they claimed kindred with them, and derived their descent from *Joseph*, and his sons *Manasseh*, and *Ephraim* [o], as they did from *Jacob* in the times of *Christ*; and yet then the *Jews* had no dealings with them, *John* iv. 9, 12, and they are manifestly distinguished by our Lord himself from the *Jews*, and from the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*, *Matt.* x. 5, 6. *John* iv. 22. What is said in favour of the *Samaritans* by Jewish writers, as by *Maimonides* *, and by *Obadiah Bartenora* †, must be understood as expressing the opinion their ancestors had of them, after they embraced the *Jewish* religion; in which they thought they were hearty and sincere, and so gave credit to them, until the wise men of *Israel*, as they say, made a strict enquiry about 'em, and

[n] Joseph. Antiqu. l. 12. c. 5. f. 5. [o] Ibid. l. 11. c. 8. f. 6. * Comment. in Misn. Beracot, c. 8. 8. † Comment. in. Ib. c. 7. 1.

and found that they worſhipped the image of a dove; after which they reckoned them as other idolatrous heathens, and would have nothing to do with them, as is aſſerted by them in thoſe very paſſages where the character is given of them, as ſtrict obſervers of the written law *.

A LATE writer [p] ſuggeſts, that *Jeroboam* not only coined a new religion by the help of his prieſts, but a new language and letters, to keep the people cloſe unto him, which language he ſuppoſes to be the *Samaritan*; but this is ſaid without any proof, or ſhadow of probability; and with equal probability is what *Genebrard* [q], from a *Jewiſh* writer, aſſerts, and which perhaps may better ſuit the hypotheſis of a change of letters, than where it is commonly placed; that "the *Jews* in *Rehoboam*'s time, that they might not join with "the ſchiſmatic *Iſraelites*, in any uſe of ſacred things, contrived the form of letters "which are now uſed, i. e. the ſquare "letters, changing their former figures, "and

* Vide Guiſium in Ib. Ling. Heb. Natal. p. 72. 3203. e Moſe Gerundenſe.

[p] Kalſ. Differt. Philolog. de [q] Chronolog. ad A. M.

" and left thoſe which have been ſince " called the *Samaritan* letters;" but, the *Samaritans* had their original language and letters elſewere; and from whence they had them, may be concluded from the account given of them in 2 *Kings* xvii. 24, 30, 31. where the places from whence they came are expreſly named, and the idolatry they brought with them fully deſcribed, and in which they continued; and by conſidering which, it will appear, that they were originally *Chaldeans* or *Phœnicians*, and had the ſame religion, language, and letters they had; ſome of them were brought from *Babylon*, the metropolis of the *Chaldean* empire, and perhaps the greater part, ſince they are firſt mentioned; and who, no doubt, brought with them their language and letters, the *Chaldean*, as they did their idolatry; for they made *ſuccoth benoth*, or *the tabernacles of the daughters*, or *booths of Venus*, as *Selden* [r] thinks it may be rendered; and which may have reſpect to the apartments in the temple of *Mylitta*, or *Venus* in *Babylon*, the like to which thoſe

[r] De Diſ. Syr. Syntagm. 2. c. 7. p. 713.

thoſe people made in *Samaria*, in which women, once in their lives, proſtituted themſelves to whomſoever aſked them, in honour of *Venus*; of which filthy practice, *Herodotus*[s] makes mention; and from the *Babylonians* the *Phœnicians* had the ſame cuſtom, their women proſtituted themſelves before their idols, and dedicated their gain to them, being ſtrongly perſuaded they would be propitious to them, and they ſhould enjoy proſperity, as *Athanaſius*[t] affirms; and *Valerius Maximus*[u] relates, that they had a temple called the temple of *Sicca Venus*, which is near in ſound to *Succoth Benoth*, where their matrons before marriage proſtituted their bodies for gain; and there was a *Phœnician* colony, three days journey from *Carthage*, called *Sicca Veneria*[w]; to which may be added, that it was a cuſtom with the *Cyprians*, another colony of the *Phœnicians*, for virgins before marriage to proſtitute themſelves, and give their gain to *Venus*[x]; by all which, it is plain from whom theſe *Samaritans* received their impiety and impurity: others of theſe people

[s] Clio, ſive l. 1. c. 199. [t] Contr. Gentes, p. 21. [u] Dict. & Fact. Memorab. l. 2. c. 6. ſ. 15. [w] Ptolem. Geograph. l. 4. c. 3. vid. Reineſ. de Ling. Punic. c. 8. ſ. 28. & Rivin. de Majumis, c. 7. ſ. 26. [x] Juſtin. e Trogo l. 18. c. 5.

people were brought from *Cuthah*, or *Cutha*, a city in *Erec*, a province of *Babylon* [y], where it is said *Abraham* lived; the *Samaritans* are commonly called *Cuthim*, or *Cuthites* in Jewish writings [z]; and so these were of the same country with the former, and had the same language and letters in all probability; the idol they made for themselves was *Nergal*, which is part of the name of two of the princes of *Babylon*, it being usual with great personages in the east, to take their idols into their names, See *Jer.* xxxix. 3. this name according to *Hillerus*, signifies the fountain of light, and denotes the sun the *Babylonians* worshipped: the next that were brought to *Samaria* by the king of *Assyria* were brought from *Ava* the same with *Iva*, *Is.* xxxvii. 17. and perhaps the same with the *Avim*, *Deut.* ii. 23. a people that formerly dwelt in *Phœnicia*, or on the borders of it, from whence might be a colony of them in the country of *Assyria* or *Babylon*; in the *Septuagent* version of v. 31. they are called *Hivites*, which were one of the seven nations of *Canaan*,

[y] Hyde Hist. Relig. Vet. Pers. c. 2. p. 39, 40. [z] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1. Vid. Pirke Eliezer, c. 26. fol. 26. 2. and c. 38. fol. 44. 2.

*Canaan*, or of old *Phœnicia*, the remains of which had ſettled in thoſe parts; theſe had for their idols, *Nibhaz* and *Tartak*, which according to *Hillerus* [b], ſignify the one the *remote one ſeeth*, that is, the ſun which beholds all things, and the other a *chain*, denoting either the fixed ſtars chained to their places, or the *Satellites* of the planets fixed to their orbs, worſhipped by the *Chaldeans* and *Aſſyrians:* the next came from *Hamath*, a city in *Syria*, on the northern borders of the land of *Canaan*, *Numb.* xxxiv. 8. their idol is called *Aſhima*, which, as *Hillerus* [c] ſays, was with the *Arabs*, the name of a lion, the ſymbol of the ſun; which might be worſhipped by theſe men, under this name, as the ſun was the chief object of the worſhip of the *Aſſyrians* and *Phœnicians*, as *Macrobius* [d] obſerves: the laſt of this colony of the *Samaritans*, were men that came from *Sepharvaim*, which was either the *Sipharah* of *Ptolemy* [e], in *Meſopotamia*, or that which was near *Babylon*. *Abydenus* [f] makes mention

[b] Onomaſtic. ſacr. p. 606. [c] Ib. p. 609. [d] Saturnal. l. 4. c. 21, 42. [e] Geograph. l 5. c. 18. [f] Apud Euſeb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 41. p. 457.

tion of, or rather, as *Vitringa* thinks [g], a city in *Syro-Phœnicia*, or a province in which *Abydenus* [h] places *Heliopolis*, namely *Cœle-Syria*; and it is certain the idolatry theſe men were guilty of, is the ſame with that of the old *Canaanites* or *Phœnicians*, who burnt their children in the fire to *Molech*, *Lev.* xviii. 21. as theſe did to *Anammelech* and *Adrammelech*, the ſame with *Molech*, as the word *Melech* with which they end, ſhews, which ſignifies king, as *Molech* does: that the *Phœnicians* ſacrificed their children to *Saturn* or *Molech*, is obſerved by *Pliny* [i], *Euſebius* [k], and *Athanaſius* [l]; hence thoſe words of *Ennius*, "poeni ſunt ſoliti, ſuos ſacrificare "puellos," as did the *Carthaginians*, a colony of the *Phœnicians*, which is affirmed by *Porphyry* [m], *Juſtin* [n], *Curtius* [o], *Peſcenius Feſtus* [p], *Diodorus Siculus* [q], and others; from all which it clearly appears, that the *Samaritans* ſprung from the *Aſſyrians* or *Chaldeans*, and the *Phœnicians*; and ſometimes they would call themſelves *Sido-*

 *nians*,

[g] Comment. in Iſaiam, c. 36, 19. [h] Apud Euſeb. ut ſupra c. 12. [i] Nat. Hiſt. l. 36. c. 5. [k] De Laud. Conſtantin. p. 646. [l] Contr. Gent. p. 21. [m] De Abſtinentia, l. 2. c. 27. [n] E Trogo, l. 18. c. 6, and l. 19. c 1. [o] Hiſt. l. 4. c. 3. [p] Apud Lactant. Inſtitut. l. 1. c. 21. [q] Bibliothec. l. 20. p. 756. 789.

*nians*[r], from *Sidon*, a chief city in *Phœnicia*; ſo that they may well be thought to bring with them to *Samaria*, the language and letters of the *Aſſyrians* and *Phœnicians*: and certain it is, that the *Samaritans* uſed the *Syrian* tongue and letters, *Ezra* iv. 7. the ſame with the *Chaldee*, *Dan.* i. 4, and 2. 4. more than two hundred years after they came to *Samaria*; for their epiſtle to the king of *Perſia* was written, in that language and letters; and according to *Joſephus**, the *Syrians*, *Phœnicians*, *Ammonites*, and *Moabites*, joined the *Samaritans* in it; and with great propriety did they uſe them in writing to a king of *Perſia*, ſince the *Perſians* and *Syrians*, for the moſt part, uſed the ſame letters and characters, as *Epiphanius*[s] aſſerts. *Jerom*[t] is clear in it, that the old *Canaanitiſh* or old *Phœnician* language is the ſame with the *Syrian*; and that the *Samaritan* language approaches nearer to the *Chaldee* or *Syriac*, than to the *Hebrew*, is affirmed by *Bochart*[u]; and whoever has but dipped into

[r] Joſeph. Antiqu. l. 11. c. 8. ſ. 6, & l. 12. c. 5. ſ. 5.
* Antiqu. l 11. c. 2. ſ. 1. [s] Contr. Hæreſ. l. 2. hæreſ. 66. [t] Comment. in Iſ. xix. fol. 29. I. [u] Epiſt. Voſſio, col. 860.

into the *Samaritan* verſion of the *Pentateuch*, will eaſily perceive it is in the *Chaldee* dialect, here and there an *Hebrew* word; and it is not to be wondered at, that they ſhould get into their language, when ſome of the *Jews* had mixed themſelves with them; and *Walton* [w] owns the ſame, that the dialect of the *Samaritan* verſion is of the ſame kindred with the *Chaldee* language, though it has ſome few words proper and peculiar to itſelf; and ſo *F. Simon* [x] ſays, that the *Samaritan* verſion is written in the *Syro-Chaldean* language, not impure, which ſhews the antiquity of it. There are three dialects of the *Syriac* language, as *Abulpharagius* [y], an *Arabic* writer relates; the *Aramæan*, the moſt elegant of all, which the inhabitants of *Roha*, *Harran*, and outer *Syria* uſed; that of *Paleſtine*, which was ſpoken by the inhabitantsof *Damaſcus*, mount *Libanus*, and interior *Syria*; and the *Chaldee Nabathean* dialect, the moſt unpoliſhed of all, uſed by thoſe who dwelt on the mountains of the *Aſſyrians*, and in the villages of *Erac* or *Babylonia*; which latter very probably, was ſpoken by the *Samari-*



[w] Præfat. ad Introduct. Ling. Oriental. ſ. 25. [x] Diſqu. Critic. c. 11. p. 88. [y] Hiſt. Dynaſt. p. 16, 17.

*tans.* What were the antient *Syrian* or *Aſſyrian* letters can only be concluded from the old *Phœnician*, which appears to be the ſame with the modern *Samaritan*; for ſince the *Phœnicians* received their letters from the *Syrians*, or *Aſſyrians*, they muſt be nearly the ſame. The uſual *Syriac* characters, in which are written the verſions of the Old and New Teſtament, are comparatively of a late date and uſe, being introduced by the chriſtians of *Antioch*; who, in imitation of *Daniel* and *Ezra*, had uſed the *Hebrew* character, but changed it for thoſe now in uſe, becauſe they would have nothing in common with the *Nazarenes* or *Ebionites* [y]: the more unuſual, and more ancient character is the *Eſtrangelo*, uſed only now for capitals, and frontiſpieces and titles of books, which is rough and unpoliſhed, and bears a reſemblance to the old *Phœnician* or *Samaritan*; and Mr. *Caſtell* [z] is expreſs for it, that the *Eſtrangelo* is the *Chaldee* character; for that the *Aſſyrians* and *Chaldeans* ever uſed the ſquare character of the *Hebrews* cannot be proved,

[y] Boderian. Præfat. ad Lex Syro-Chald. Walton Præfat. ut ſupra, ſ. 35. [z] Lexic. Heptoglott. col. 178. vid. Pfefferi Critica ſacra, f. 2. problem. Queſt. 1.

proved, ſince we have no writings of theirs extant; for what *Chaldee* books we have, were written by *Jews*, either in, or after the *Babyloniſh* captivity; as by *Daniel*, and *Ezra*, who wrote *Chaldee* in the ſquare character, becauſe it was what their ſacred books were written in, they had been uſed to, and the people alſo, for whoſe uſe they wrote; and in after times, the *Chaldee* paraphraſes were written by *Jews*; and ſo both *Talmuds*, though leſs pure; and it ſeems this character was uſed by the *Syrian* chriſtians, in imitation of the *Jews*, before their change of characters already mentioned; but after the *Chaldee* monarchy ceaſed, no books were written by any of that people in their own language. *Beroſus* the *Chaldean*, and others, wrote in *Greek*. *Theophilus* of *Antioch*[a] indeed ſays, that *Beroſus* ſhewed the *Greeks Chaldee* letters; but whether by them he means their learning, laws, and hiſtory, or the characters of their letters, is not certain; if the letters, it does not appear what they were: hence *Hottinger*[b] concluded



[a] Ad Autolyc. l. 3. p. 129. [b] Smegma oriental. par. 1. p. 35. Gram. Chald. Syr. p. 4.

cluded that the ancient character of the *Aſſyrians* and *Chaldeans* is unſeen, and unknown, and that nothing certain is had concerning it; ſome, he ſays, think it is the *Samaritan*, which is right, others, the *Ethiopic*; but he himſelf was in ſuſpence, and hoped, that in ſome time would be publiſhed by *Golius*, ſome *Chaldee* writings, in the ancient tongue and character; but whether any ever were publiſhed, I never heard. The *Jews* ſay [c], that after the hand-writing of the angel upon the wall, and the publication of the *Hebrew* characters by *Ezra*, the *Chaldeans* left their own characters, and uſed them; but this ſeems to be ſaid without any good foundation.

Now, ſince both the *Samaritan* language and letters differ from the *Hebrew*, being the old *Phœnician* and *Aſſyrian*; it was neceſſary that, when the *Pentateuch* of *Moſes* was brought among them, it ſhould be copied, and put into *Samaritan* letters, that they might read it, as it was, and that from a copy in the ſquare character, as the

[c] Buxtorf. de Lit. Heb. Addit.

the variations ſhew, before obſerved; and it was neceſſary alſo, that there ſhould be a verſion of it in their own language, that they might the better underſtand it, and which alſo has been done; and upon the whole, I think it plainly appears, that they always retained their own language and letters, which were the *Aſſyrian* and old *Phœnician*, to the times of *Manaſſeh* their high prieſt, and ages after, as the *Hebrews* retained their language and letters alſo, the ſquare ones; ſo that there ſeems to be no foundation for any ſuch change of letters being made by *Ezra*, as has been contended for.

CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

### *Of the Antiquity of the Vowel-Points, and Accents.*

I Put the vowel-points and accents together, becauſe, according to the doctrine of them, they have a dependence on each other; the points are often changed according to the poſition of the accents, and therefore the one muſt be as early as the other; and as *Elias Levita*[b] himſelf obſerves, "there is no ſyllable without a "point, and there is no word without an "accent." About the antiquity of theſe there has been a controverſy for a century or two paſt, and which is not yet decided; nor do I expect it will be by this eſſay of mine; all that I propoſe is, to try how far back, or how high, in point of antiquity, theſe things can be traced and carried.

THERE have been divers opinions concerning them. Some think they are of a divine original; and others, that they are of human invention. Some ſuppoſe that they were

[b] Sepher Tob Taam, ſive, de accent. c. 4.

were firſt invented by *Ben Aſher* and *Ben Naphtali*, about the year 1037[e]; others, that they were deviſed by the Jews of *Tiberias*, 500 years after Chriſt at leaſt, or however were invented after the *Talmud* was finiſhed[f]; others aſcribe them to *Ezra* and the men of the great ſynagogue[g]; who they ſuppoſe, at leaſt revived and reſtored them, and fixed them to the conſonants, which before were only delivered and uſed in a traditionary way; and others are of opinion, they were given to *Moſes* on mount *Sinai*, as to the power of them in pronouncing and reading, though not as to the make and figures of them in writing, but were propagated by tradition to the times of *Ezra*; whilſt others believe they were *ab origine*[h], and were invented by *Adam* together with the letters, or however that they were coeval with the letters, and in uſe as ſoon as they were: which account is moſt probable, may appear by tracing them ſtep by ſtep, from one period of

[e] So Morinus de Sinceritate Heb. & Gr. Text. l. 2. Exercitat. 14. c. 1. Genebrard. chronolog. p 181. Calmet. &c. [f] Elias Levita, præfat. 3. [g] Ben Chayim præfat. Bibl. in principio & multi ſcript. Jud. [h] Coſri par. 4. ſ. 25. Muſcatus in ib. fol. 229. 1. Meor Enayim. c. 59.

of time to another; and to begin with the loweſt of them,

A. D. 1037.

In this year, according to *R. Gedaliah*[e] and *David Ganz*[f], flouriſhed two famous Jews, *Ben Aſher*, and *Ben Naphtali*, to whom ſome have aſcribed the invention of the vowel-points; and ſo early, however, it is owned that they exiſted, even 700 years ago and more: but that theſe were the inventors of them is not probable, ſince in the following century lived many eminent Jewiſh doctors, *Jarchi*, *Kimchi*, and *Aben Ezra*, who often make mention of the points, but never as a novel invention; which, had theſe been the authors of, it can hardly be thought, but that they would have made mention of them as ſuch, and commended them for it. *Kimchi*[g] obſerves againſt thoſe that read *Adonai* lord, and *immecha* with thee, in *Pſ.* cx. 1, 3. inſtead of *Adoni* my lord, and *ammeca* thy people, "that from the riſing of the ſun to the ſet-"ting of it, (i. e. throughout the world) "you

[e] Shalſhalat Hakabala fol. 28. 2. [f] Tzemach David. par. 1. fol. 37, 1. [g] Apud Pocok. Porta Moſis miſcell. not. p. 58.

" you will find, in all copies, *Nun* with " *chirek*, and *Ain* with *pathach*:" ſo that in his time pointed bibles were in common and general uſe. Beſides, he charges *Jerom* with an error on account of the points, and therefore muſt believe they were in his time. The author of the book of *Coſri*, [h] even if *R. Judah Hallevi* was the author of it, lived about 1140, or as others, 1089; and he ſpeaks of punctuation as a divine thing, as the effect of divine wiſdom, and does not appear to have the leaſt notion of its being of human invention, and much leſs the invention of the preſent age or preceding century; nay *R. Judah Chijug*, ſaid [i] to be the firſt grammarian and the chief of them, he found the Bible pointed and accented, as *Elias Levita* [k] ſays; and he was coeval with *Ben Aſher*, and wrote a book of the double letters, and another of pointing, [l] as if it was of long time and generally received, and was become an art; he makes not the leaſt mention of *Ben Aſher* being concerned in it; and ſo *R. Jonah*, another grammarian, a little after him, is ſilent concerning this matter [m]; and

[h] Par. 3. c. 32. [i] Balmeſii Mikneh Abraham p. 24. lin. 10. Eliæ præfat. Methurgeman, fol. 2. 1. [k] Ib. [l] Wolfii Bibliothec. Heb. p. 338. 424. [m] Vid. Buxtorf. de Punct. Antiq. par. 2. p. 329.

and *Aben Ezra* ſpeaks[n] of *Ben Labrat*, who was before 'em both, as having found חרבות with *pathach* in *Pſ.* ix. 6. in an antient pointed copy; ſo that there was an *antient pointed* Bible before theſe men were in being: and what puts it out of all doubt that theſe men could not be the inventors of the points is, as *Elias Levita* obſerves,[o] that their diſſentions and diſputes were about the points and accents, and about words before pointed, and not then pointed; wherefore it is not reaſonable to ſuppoſe that they would diſagree and diſpute about what they themſelves had invented; ſo that it moſt evidently appears, that the points muſt be in uſe before their time.

A. D. 927.

About this time lived *Saadiah Gaon*, who wrote a book concerning pointing, which *Jarchi*, on *Pſ.* xlv. 9. makes mention of, and ſays he ſaw it; the points therefore muſt be before his time; for it cannot be thought that he ſhould write a book concerning an art, and the rules of it, which did not exiſt: the accents alſo muſt then be in uſe, ſince, as *Gaon* was for dividing



[n] Comment. in Pſ. 9. 6. [o] Præfat. 3.

*Jehovah* from *righteouſneſs* in *Jer.* xxiii. 6. making the latter to be the name of the Meſſiah, and the former the name of God, who called him ſo. *Aben Ezra*[p] replies to him, that he miſtook or perverted the author of the accents, and made him guilty of an error, who put *Tarcha* (or *Tiphca*) on יקראו; and again, whereas the word *Jehovah* is repeated in *Exod.* xxxiv. 6. *Gaon* obſerves that the firſt name is to be connected with ויקרא, *proclaimed*; but *Aben Ezra*[q] replies, if it ſhould be ſo, why did not the author of the accents connect it? but ſays he, it is right to repeat the name, as *Abraham Abraham*, *Jacob Jacob*, *Moſes Moſes*. Now it would have been abſurd in *Aben Ezra* to have charged *Gaon* with a miſtake or perverſion of the accents, if they were not in being in the times of *Gaon:* he lived many years before *Ben Aſher* and *Ben Naphtali*; this proves that they were not the inventors of them; and *Aben Ezra* himſelf lived in the next century to them, and he ſpeaks of the accents not as a novel invention, but of as early uſe as the men of *Ezra*'s great ſynagogue; and ex-

[p] Comment. in Exod. 18. 3. [q] Ib. in Exod 34. 6.

expreſſes ſuch an high opinion of them, that he adviſes not to acquieſce in any expoſition that is not according to them, nor hearken to it.

A. D. 900.

In the church of St. *Dominic* in *Bononia*, a copy of the *Hebrew* ſcriptures is kept with great care, which is pretended to be the original copy written by *Ezra* himſelf, and is valued at a high rate; ſo that ſometimes the *Bononians* have borrowed large ſums of money upon it, and repaid them for the redemption of it. It is written in a very fair character, on calf-ſkin dreſs'd, the letters retaining their blackneſs, and it is made up in a roll, according to the antient manner. This copy was preſented by the Jews to *Aymericus*, the then maſter of the order of St. *Dominic*, who exerciſed that office about the year 1308, as *Montfaucon*[r] relates, who ſaw it; and who further obſerves, that beſides a *Latin* inſcription ſewed to it in the middle of the volume, which he gives, there is alſo one in *Hebrew*, "this is the book of the law of *Moſes*,

[r] Diar. Italic. p. 399. 400. vid. ejuſdem Præliminar. in Hexapla Origen. p. 22.

" *ſes*, which *Ezra* the ſcribe wrote, and " read before the congregation, both men " and women; and he ſtood in a wooden " pulpit." *Montfaucon* ſays not whether it is pointed or no, but dean *Prideaux* [r] ſays, it has the vowel-points; and *Franciſcus Tiſſardus Ambaceus* aſſerts [t] the ſame, who ſays he often ſaw it; as did alſo *Arias Montanus*, [u] and who affirms that it has the *Maſorah*, the ſame as in the *Venetian* and *Bombergian* editions. Now though there is no reaſon to believe it to be the autograph of *Ezra*, nor near ſo early, yet, according to the account of it, it muſt be antient; for it is near 460 years ago ſince it was preſented by the Jews to the monaſtery, and as they preſented it as a very antient copy, even as the autograph of *Ezra*, it muſt have had then marks of antiquity on it, and muſt have been written ſome ages before; and as Dr. *Kennicott* [w] obſerves, it is a moderate ſuppoſition to imagine it was written as long before it was preſented, as it has been ſince, and ſo muſt be of as early a date as where I have placed it.

A. D.

[r] Connection, par. 1. p. 362. [t] Gram. Heb. apud Hottinger. Theſaur. Philolog. p. 512, 513. [u] Præfat. de ver. Lect. in Heb. Lib. [w] Diſſertation, vol. 1. p. 310.

A. D. 740.

If the book of *Cosri*, before-mentioned, was not only compiled from loose sheets and put together by *R. Judah Hallevi*, as some think; but that the dialogue itself was had between a Jew, whose name, some say, was *Isaac Sangari*, and a *Persian* king, whose name was *Chosroes*, and which *R. Judah* says, was 400 years before his time, so he suggests in the beginning of the book; and whereas he flourished about the year 1140, this book must be composed, or this dialogue held, about the year 740. Now in this work the points and accents are much spoken of, in which the author commends the excellence and elegance of the *Hebrew* tongue on account of them; gives many of the names of both, and declares the usefulness of them; asserts that they were received by tradition from *Moses*; that they are the production of admirable wisdom, and would never have been received had they not come from a prophet, or one divinely assisted [x]; and he does not give the least hint of their being of an human, and much less of a modern in-

[x] Cosri, par. 2. f. 80. & par. 3. f. 31, 32.

invention; yea, expreſly aſcribes the ſeven kings or vowel-points, as *Aben Ezra* alſo calls them, to *Ezra* and the men of his ſynagogue, and which he ſuppoſes they received by tradition from *Moſes*.

A. D. 600.

THOSE who aſcribe the invention of the points to the Jews of *Tiberias*, ſuppoſe that this was after the year 500, when the *Babylonian Talmud* was finiſhed. Their reaſon for it is, becauſe, as they affirm, no mention is made of them in that work, and therefore the invention of them muſt be later than that; but of this more hereafter. However, according to this hypotheſis, one would think they muſt have been invented and in uſe by the time above given; though indeed thoſe who eſpouſe this hypotheſis, are at a very great uncertainty about the exact time of this invention. The firſt perſon that broached this notion was *Elias Levita*, a *German* Jew, who lived in the 16th century, contrary to the ſentiments and belief of his whole nation; who either ſuppoſe the points were from *Ezra*, and the men of the great ſynagogue, or from *Moſes* at mount *Sinai*, or from *Adam* who had

them from God himſelf. This man aſſerted,[y] that after the finiſhing of the *Talmud,* which he places in the year 436, after the deſolation of the ſecond temple, aroſe the men of *Tiberias*; wiſe and great men, expert in the ſcripture, and in purity and in eloquence of language excelled all the *Jews* in thoſe times; and after them did not ariſe any like them, and that theſe were the authors of the points: this is ſaid without offering the leaſt proof of it, and by one that lived near a thouſand years after; it is ſtrange that he only ſhould be in this ſecret; that no hiſtory, Jewiſh nor Chriſtian, ſhould make mention of it for ſuch a courſe of years: it is not probable that there were ſuch a ſett of men at *Tiberias* about the time ſuggeſted, ſince a great deſtruction of the *Jews* was made at it, in the year 352, by *Gallus*, at the command of *Conſtantius*; and ſince promotion to doctorſhip ceaſed in the land of *Iſrael* with *Hillell* the prince, who flouriſhed about the year 340, as the *Jewiſh* chronologers[z] obſerve: and ſince the flouriſhing univerſity of the *Jews* was at *Babylon* at the

[y] Præfat 3. ad Maſoret. [z] Shalſhalet Hakabala fol. 25. 2. Gan 2. Tz. mach David, fol. 33. 1.

the time of this pretended invention, very unlikely it is, that it ſhould be done without their knowledge, advice, and aſſiſtance, and without either approbation of it, or oppoſition to it by any of them, for ought appears; and that it ſhould be univerſally received by the *Jews* at once every where, and not one *Momus* to find fault, this is very extraordinary; yea, that it ſhould be received by the *Karaite Jews* themſelves, enemies to tradition and innovation, as will be ſeen hereafter. It is ſtrange that, according to this ſcheme, as many perſons muſt be employed in this work, that there ſhould be but one ſort of pointing; that they ſhould all take the ſame method, throughout the whole Bible, without any variation, except ſome anomalies, and which are to be obſerved in letters as well as in points; and that this ſhould be always continued with the *Jews*, and never any other ſcheme propoſed and attempted; and that it ſhould not be known who began it and when. And indeed we are left at a very great uncertainty about the place where this wondeful affair was tranſacted; *Elias*, the relator of it, ſhould he be preſſed

hard, ſeems to have found a ſubterfuge to retreat unto, and therefore he tells us that *Tiberias* is *Moeſia** ; but where that is he ſays not, but leaves us to ſeek for it where we can, and take a wild goat's chace into *Aſia Minor*, to *Pontus*, or *Bithynia*, or *Paphlagonia*, where *Moeſia* or *Myſia* is ſaid to be ; but never famous for *Jewiſh* doctors, nor have any been heard of in it : the *Tiberias* of the ſcripture, and of *Joſephus*, and of the *Jewiſh* writers in general, was a city in *Paleſtine*, ſituate on the lake of *Geneſaret* ; famous in their writings for the laſt ſitting of the *Sanhedrim* in it, for a very conſiderable univerſity there, for the reſidence of *R. Judah*, the ſaint, in it, where it is probable he compiled the *Miſnah*, and of many others of their celebrated doctors, in the 2d and 3d centuries ; and where it is certain the *Jeruſalem Talmud* was finiſhed, in the 3d century ; after which the univerſity in it began to decreaſe, and we hear but now and then of a doctor in that place, the univerſities in *Babylon* bearing away all the glory ; there-

* Præfat. 3. ad Maſoret. he ſeems to have taken this name of *Tiberias* from Ben Chayim in Maſor. Mag. Lit. ך fol. 31. 2. or from David Kimchi, in Miclol. fol. 108. 2.

therefore it is not probable, that this buſineſs of pointing the Bible was done by the men of *Tiberias* in later times: and if it was, it is ſtrange that none of them ſhould declare themſelves the authors of the points, or that they had an hand in the invention of them, or were aſſiſting in that work, ſince it would have gained them immortal honour, it being allowed to be an ingenious and uſeful work; and eſpecially ſince the *Jews* are proud boaſters and lovers of fame and reputation: ſtrange, very ſtrange it is, that not one of the men concerned in this work can be named; nor any time fixed when it was done by them, whether 100 years after the finiſhing of the *Talmud*, or 200, or 300 or 400; neither of which it ſeems the eſpouſers of this notion chuſe to fix upon, neither on particular men, nor on a particular time, leſt they ſhould be entangled. The only man I have met with, that has ventured to fix the date of the invention of the points, is *Poſſevinus* the jeſuit,[a] who in his great wiſdom has pitched on the year 478, when the points began to be in uſe; and ſo ſome



[a] Apud Herman. Hugonem de prima ſcribendi orig. c. 27. p. 168.

years before the finiſhing of the *Talmud*, according to the moſt early account of it; whereby he has deſtroyed the hypotheſis on which this notion is built. It is incredible that men under a judicial blindneſs, and the curſe of God, ignorant of divine things, ſhould form a ſcheme which ſo well aſcertains the ſenſe of the ſcriptures; that they ſhould hit on ſuch an invention, and publiſh it, ſo ſubverſive of their own religion, and ſo ſerviceable to chriſtianity and its doctrines, and which in no one inſtance oppoſes it; and that after they had ſeen, as they muſt in the age they are ſuppoſed to invent them, what uſe the chriſtians had made of various paſſages of ſcripture againſt *Judaiſm*, and in favour of chriſtianity; and yet ſhould point and accentuate thoſe very paſſages againſt themſelves, and for the chriſtians: take one inſtance in the room of many as to accents. in *Gen.* xlix. 10. how gladly now would they have the *Athnach* removed from רגלו to עד and then read the words, as they have attempted to do[b], *the ſcepter ſhall not depart from* Judah, *nor a law-giver from between*

[b] Vid. Menaſſeh. ben Iſrael. Conciliat. in Gen. Quæſt. 65. f. 3.

*between his feet for ever; for* Shiloh *ſhall come:* but the accents are againſt them, and forbid this reading; of what uſe they are in *Jer.* xxiii. 6. has been already obſerved: nor is it credible, that the accents ſhould be invented by the *Jews* about the time ſuppoſed; ſince one uſe of them was to lead and direct in muſic, and that the uſe of accents ſhould in proſe and verſe be different, as they be in metrical and proſe-writings of the Bible, when at the time ſuppoſed, metre was diſuſed, and the metre of the *Hebrews* loſt and unknown. He that can believe ſuch a romantic ſtory as all this is, need not be ſqueamiſh to believe the moſt arrant lye and notorious fable, to be met with in the whole *Talmud*; a greater I know not; a louder lye I believe was never told by a *Jew*, nor by any other, that ever met with the leaſt degree of credit in the world; it is amazing it ſhould be believed by any: ſome *Proteſtants* at firſt received it, through their too great credulity, and through their high eſteem for the above-mentioned *Elias*, by whom they were taught the *Hebrew* language, of the uſefulneſs of which they were ſenſible. Many of the *Papiſts* greedily catched at it,

and commended the *Proteſtants* for receiving it; who might hope, in the iſſue, to avail themſelves of it, ſince it would appear from hence, that the ſenſe of ſcripture the *Proteſtant*s had given into, depended on the invention of men, even of ſome *Jews*, long ſince the time of Chriſtianity; and they might hope that on this account, they would reject the points, and then, as words would be ſubject to various ſenſes without them, and ſome contrary to each other, they would at laſt be convinced of the neceſſity of one infallible interpreter of ſcripture. *Morinus*, a papiſt, and a very principal oppoſer of the points, in a book[c], highly commended by ſome *Proteſtant* writers, ſpeaks out plainly; he ſays, "the reaſon "why God would have the ſcriptures writ-"ten in the ambiguous manner they are, "(i. e. without points) is, becauſe it was "his will that every man ſhould be ſub-"ject to the *judgment of the church*, and "not interpret the ſcriptures in his own "way; for ſeeing the reading of the ſcrip-"tures is ſo difficult, and ſo liable to va-"rious ambiguities, (i. e. a mere noſe of "wax,

[c] De Heb. & Græc. Text. Sinceritate, l. 1. Exercitat. 6. c. 2. ſ. 8. p. 198, 199.

" wax, to be turned any way); from the " very nature of the thing, he obſerves, it " is plain, that it was not the will of God, " that every one ſhould raſhly and irreve- " rently take upon him to explain it, nor " to ſuffer the common people to expound " it at their pleaſure, but, that in thoſe, " as in other things reſpecting religion, " his will is, that the people ſhould de- " pend upon *the prieſts*."

A. D. 500.

About this time the *Babylonian Talmud* was finiſhed; according to *Scaliger**, in 508; in which it is ſaid no mention is made of the points and accents: but, upon enquiry, it will be found to be otherwiſe; for though the *Talmudiſts* do not mention the names, nor expreſs the figures of the vowel-points, they manifeſtly ſuppoſe them; which ſhew they were in being in their times; as when they ſay, *read not ſo, but ſo*, it is plain they have no reference to the conſonants, which are the ſame one way as another; they muſt have reſpect to the difference of the vowel-points,

* De Emend. Temp. l. 7. p. 323.

points, the doctrine of which is the foundation of their remarks, and therefore must be known by them: so the *Karaites* charge the *Rabbins* with perverting the commands of God by their *Al-tikra's, read not so, but so,* not changing the consonants but the vowels and accents; for having said that the copies of theirs and the *Rabbins*, with respect to punctuation were the same; they observe, that otherwise in the places where they change the vowels and accents, and say, *do not read so, but so,* they would not have said, *do not read,* but absolutely would have pointed according to their pleasure; but that it is suggested they dared not do; which, the *Karaites* add, is a proof, that before the finishing of the *Talmud,* from the days of old, the law was pointed and accented [b]; thus when they say [c], with respect to *Ps.* l. 23. do not read וישם but וישם, they mean do not read *Shin* with a point on the right hand, but with a point on the left; so quoting *Prov.* xix. 23. they direct [d], do not read שבע but שבע that is, do not read the word with the point on the left hand

[b] Dod Mordecai, c. 11. p. 137. c. 12. p. 152. 153. [c] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 5. 2. Moed Katon, fol 5. 1. [d] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 14. 1.

hand of *Shin*, when it would ſignify *ſatisfied*, as the common punctuation reads; but with the point on the right hand of it, and then it ſignifies *ſeven*; and ſo proves what it is quoted for, as they think, that that man that lies ſeven nights without a dream, is an evil man, and ſo read what follows; *he ſhall not be viſited, he is an evil man:* and ſo in *If.* ii. 22. *Ula* ſays[e], don't read במה but במה, that is, to ſerve his own purpoſe, don't read as if it was *Bamah*, (i. e. pointed with a *Patach* and *Segol*) which would ſignify *wherein*, but *Bamah*, (i. e. with two *Kametzes*) and ſo ſignifies an high place; likewiſe in *If.* liv. 3. 1. it is ſaid[f], dont read בניך (i. e. with a *Kametz*) thy children, but בוניך, (i. e. with a *vau*, and *cholem*) thy builders; ſo quoting *Ezekiel*, xlviii. 25. it is obſerved[g], don't read שמה, *Shammah* there (i. e. with two *Kametzes*) but שמה, *Shemah*, his name, (as if with *Shevah*, and *Kametz*) and this form does not ſuppoſe any corruption of the text, nor even a various reading; but is a kind of allegorical ſport of theſe *Rabbins* among themſelves as *F. Simon* * calls it; when to ſhew their *acumen*, obſerve,

[e] T. Bab. Sotah fol. 4. 2. [f] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 64. 1. [g] T. Bab. Bathra, fol. 75. 2. * Diſquiſ. Crit. c. 3. p. 17.

obſerve, what different ſenſes may be put upon a word by its being differently pointed, which they propoſe to conſideration, as if it was thus, or thus pointed; but then this ſuppoſes the points to have been in being or they could not divert themſelves after this manner: and it ſhould be obſerved, that this phraſe is uſed chiefly in giving allegorical expoſitions, and is not by way of authority and command, as enjoining ſuch a reading; but by way of conceſſion; or ſuppoſing it was read ſo, it would yield a commodious ſenſe, eſpecially if allegorical[c]: nor can I ſee how this phraſe could be uſed in writing by giving inſtances as above, without expreſſing the very marks and figures of the points as put to the words in debate; or otherwiſe they muſt act like delirious men indeed: nor can I ſee how the ridiculous ſtory, concerning *Joab*'s ſlaying of his maſter for teaching him to read wrong could be related in the *Talmud*[d] without the vowel-points being put to the word in it, which is told thus; after *Joab* had cut off every male in *Edom*,

1 *Kings*

[c] Vid. Maimon. Moreh Nevochim. par. 3. c. 43. Hottinger. Theſaur. philolog. l. 1. c. 2. p. 214. Buxtorf. de Punctuat. par. 1. p. 97, 98. Surenhuſ. Biblos Kattalages, p. 459. [d] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 21. l. 2.

1 *Kings* xi. 15, 16. when he came before *David* he ſaid to him, what is the reaſon that thou haſt ſo done? (i. e. that thou haſt not deſtroyed the females, as the gloſs is) he replied, becauſe it is written (*Deut.* xxv. 19.) thou ſhalt blot out זכר of *Amaleck*; *David* ſaid unto him, but behold we read זכר; *Joab* anſwered, I was taught to read it זכר: he went and aſked his maſter, ſaying, how didſt thou teach me to read, he told him זכר; he drew his ſword to kill him. Now where is the difference? they all ſay the ſame thing, *David*, *Joab*, and his maſter, as the bare letters of the word without the vowel-points are given. What ſenſe can be made of this ſtory, thus told? No doubt but in the *Talmud*, as originally written, the ſeveral vowel-points were put to this word; as ſaid to be read by *Joab*, it was *zacar*, male, with two *Kametzes*; as by *David* and *Joab*'s maſter, it was *zecer*, remembrance, with two *Segols*; and ſo in other caſes, of a ſimilar kind, the points were put, though in proceſs of time left out, through the careleſſneſs or ſloth of tranſcribers; and two inſtances of this I have met with where the very

figures

figures of the vowel-points are uſed; thus having quoted *Numb.* xiii. 31. it is directed[h] dont read ממנו *than us* (with a *Shureck)* but ממנו *than him* (with a *Cholem)*; and in another place[i], with reſpect to the paſſage in *Deut.* xxiii. 18, they ſay, do not read זונה (with a *Kametz)* but זונה (with a *Segol)*; the firſt word, pointed as directed, ſignifies a *whore,* being feminine, the other, differently pointed, is maſculine, and ſignifies a *fornicator*[k]. My *Talmud* is of the *Amſterdam* and *Frankford* edition, and I have no opportunity of conſulting another: ſhould it be ſaid, theſe points are annexed to the words by the *editors* of this work; I aſk why they are not added to the words in the other inſtances? no doubt the reaſon is, becauſe they were originally ſo in the *Talmud,* and ſo I found them; and I make no queſtion of their being put in all other inſtances, though omitted by copiers. To theſe obſervations I would add, the prick or point on the *Vau* in the word for *aroſe,* in *Gen.* xix. 33. is taken notice of in the *Talmud*[l]; and ſo are the 15 pricks on

[h] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 35. 1. [i] T. Bab. Temurah, fol. 29. 2. [k] Vid. Schindler. Lexic. Pentaglott. col. 495. [l] T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 10. 2, & Nazir, fol 21. 1.

on ſeveral words in the bible, among which this is one[m] and on the word for *unleſs*, in *Pſ.* xxvii. 13.[n] and on *Deut.* xxix. 29.[o] Now if theſe pricks and points were ſo early, which are of ſo little uſe, much more the vowel-points; and as for the accents, they are expreſly mentioned: thus thoſe words in *Nehem.* viii. 8. are interpreted, *ſo they read in the law of God*, this is the Scripture; *diſtinctly*, this is the *Targum*; and *gave the ſenſe*; theſe are the verſes pointed, as *R. Niſſim* on that place in the *Talmud* interprets it, *and cauſed them to underſtand the reading*, theſe are פיסקי טעמים *the diſtinctions of the accents*[p]; and ſo in other places mention is made of the diſtinctions of the accents[q], and of the accents of the law[r], which might be ſhewn and pointed at by the hand, and therefore muſt be viſible marks or figures; and which are to be underſtood both of vowel-points, and of accents; and ſo the *gloſs* on that place interprets it, both of pointing and the elevation of the voice in ſinging according to

[m] Aboth. R. Nathan, c. 34. fol. 18. Sopherim. c. 1. f. 3. [n] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 4. 1. [o] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 2. [p] T. Bab Megi lah, fol. 3. 1. & Nedarim, fol. 37. 2. [q] T. Bab. Chagigah, fol. 6. 2. [r] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 62. 1. & Gloſs in Ib. Peſachim, fol. 119. 1.

to the accents. And the marks and figures of them, they say in the *Talmud*, *Solomon*[e] instructed the people in; for so those words are paraphrased in it, *he taught the people knowledge*, for he instructed them טעמים בסימני *in the signs*, marks, figures, or characters *of the accents:* and on the phrase, *his locks are bushy*, it is observed; from hence we learn that he *(Solomon)* sought out and explained *every tittle*, prick, or point *(in the law)* heaps of heaps of the constitutions or decisions of it[f]: and in one of the above places[g] referred to, they dispute about giving a reward to such who taught the accents; which surely could never be thought of, if the accents were not yet invented; to which may be added, that in the *Talmud** mention is made of some words in the Bible, "written but "not read," and of others, "read but "not written;" those that are written but not read are alone without the vowel-points, as in *Jer.* li. 3. &c. Those that are read but not written, are those whose

[e] T. B. Eruvim, fol. 21. 2. [f] Ibid. [g] Nedarim, fol. 37. 1. * T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37. 2. Massechet. Sopherim. c. 6. f. 7, 8.

whoſe vowel-points ſtand alone in the text, and the conſonants in the margin, of which there are ten, *Jud.* xx. 13. *Ruth* iii. 5. 17. 2 *Sam.* viii. 3. and xvi. 23. and xviii. 20. 2 *Kings* xix. 31. 37. *Jer.* xxxi. 38. and l. 29. This ſhews that the ſtate of the *Hebrew* text, with reſpect to theſe *Keries* and *Cetibs*, was the ſame at the compoſition of the *Talmud* as now; and that the *Talmudiſts* muſt have been acquainted with pointed Bibles, and conſequently points muſt have been in uſe before the finiſhing of the *Talmud*; and ſo before the pretended men of *Tiberias*: the ablation of the ſcribes is ſpoken of in the ſame *tract*, which forbids the reading the ſuperfluous *Vau* in five places; and alſo the reading of the ſcribes, which ſhews how they read and pronounced ſome words, as *Arets*, *Shamaim*, *Mitzraim*; as *Aretz*, ſometimes *Aratz*, and ſometimes *Erets*, according to the diverſity of the accents, as *Buxtorff* obſerves*; and *Shamaim* ſometimes with *Kametz* and *Patach*, and ſometimes with a double *Kametz*, becauſe of the pauſe; and ſo *Mitzraim*. The note of R. *Niſſim* on

 the

* Tiberias, c. 8. p. 11.

the place is, becauſe of the *Athnach*, *Aretz* is read with a *Kametz*, and *Shamaim* and *Mitzraim*, though they have no *Aleph* in them, are read as if they had.

A. D. 400.

THE *Maſorah*, or *Maſoreth*, as it is ſometimes called, which ſignifies *tradition*, is a work conſiſting of remarks on ſeveral things in the Bible, handed down to poſterity from one to another; it does not appear to be the work of one man, nor of a ſett of men, and living in one age or place, who were jointly concerned in it, but of various perſons, in ſeveral ages: it might be begun by the men of the great ſynagogue of *Ezra*, to whom the *Jewiſh* writers generally aſcribe it; and be carried on by ſcribes and copiers in after ages, and at laſt finiſhed by the men of *Tiberias*; not the *Utopian* men of *Tiberias*, after the year 500, who lived in the 6th and 7th centuries, as pretended, but by thoſe who lived in the 2d and 3d centuries, and in the beginning of the 4th; men of fame and note among the *Jews*, and whoſe names are given, and an account of them in the *Jeruſalem Talmud*, of whom more hereafter; though in

later times, ſome things have crept into this work, and additions made to it, in which the names of *Jarchi* and *Ben Gerſom* are mentioned, and even ſome are the notes of *Ben Chayim* himſelf, the firſt editor of it in printed Bibles; who with much pains brought it into ſome form and order, and diſpoſed of it in the manner it is in ſome printed copies: however, it is certain the work was in being before the *Babylonian Talmud*; for the juſt now mentioned editor of the *Maſorah*, in his preface which ſtands before *Bomberg*'s Bible, and which *Buxtorff* alſo has placed before his, aſſerts, that in many places the *Talmud* contradicts the *Maſorah*; and beſides it is expreſly mentioned in it. Such phraſes are ſometimes* to be met with in it as אם למקרא, and אם למסורת; the meaning of which is, that ſuch an expoſition of a word or paſſage, has its foundation in the Scripture, or is according to that, and is the literal ſenſe of it, as it is commonly read; and that ſuch an expoſition or interpretation of a word or paſſage, has its foundation in the



* T. Bab. Peſachim, fol. 86. 2. Succah, fol. 6. 2. Kidduſhin, fol. 18. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 4. 1.

*Maſorah*, or is according to that §; and is the traditionary ſenſe of it, as it may be read and pronounced by other vowels: yea, thoſe men who are ſaid to have numbered all the letters in the law, and the verſes in it, and to have pointed out the letter which is exactly the middle of the pentateuch, and in other books, are called ראשנים the *antients*; who had lived long ago, and with whom the compilers of the *Talmud* were not to be named *; and are thought by the learned biſhop *Uſher* † to be the men of the great ſynagogue of *Ezra*; falſe therefore it is what *F. Simon* ſays ‡, from *Elias Levita*, that the *Maſorah* is later than the *Talmud:* yea, Chriſt himſelf, in his time, ſpeaks of a traditionary ſett of men, who, he ſays, were of old time, and are called by him, αρχαιοι, the *antients*; who delivered down peculiar ſenſes of the law from age to age, and may be truly ſaid to be a ſort of *Maſoretes*, *Matt.* v. 28. the ſame who elſewhere are called *elders*, and to whom traditions are aſcribed, *Matt.* xv. 2. *Mark* vii. 3, 5. though perhaps the *miſ-*

*nic*

§ Vid. Halicot Olam, par. 4. c. 3. p. 187. * T. Bab. Kidduſhin, fol. 30. 1. & Sabbat, fol. 112. 2. † Epiſt. ad Capell. in calce de ſept. interpr. p. 211. ‡ Diſquiſ. Critic. c. 4. p. 23.

*nic* doctors are rather more peculiarly intended: and certain it is, that the ſeveral parts of the work of the *Maſoretes* aſcribed to them, are made mention of in the *Talmud*; as not only the numbering of the letters and verſes in the law before aſſerted; but the diſtinction of verſes themſelves is ſpoken of in it, and is aſcribed to *Moſes*, though by *Elias Levita* * made to be the work of the *Maſoretes*; in the *Talmud* † it is ſaid, "whatever verſe *Moſes* did not "diſtinguiſh, we do not diſtinguiſh:" yea, we read of the diſtinction of verſes in the *Miſnah* ‡, which was compiled ſome hundreds of years before the *Talmud*. The various readings which the *Maſoretes* are ſaid to be the authors of, even divers ſorts of them are mentioned in the *Talmud* §; and their concern with the points and accents will be preſently obſerved: but not only theſe parts of the work aſſigned them, but the forms of letters, greater, leſſer, or ſuſpended, marked by the *Maſoretes* in the Bible, are obſerved in the *Tal-*

 *mud*;

* Sepher Tob Taam, c. 2. Megillah, fol. 22, 1.

† T. Bab. Megillah, c. 4. f. 4.

‡ Miſn. Megillah,

§ T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37. 2.

*mud* ||; yea, the *Maſorah* itſelf is mentioned in it. In the interpretation of *Neh.* viii. 8. taken notice of in the preceding ſection, that part of it, *and cauſed them to underſtand the reading*, as ſome interpret it of the diſtinction of accents; others ſay, theſe are the *Maſorah* [s], or *Maſoretic* notes, or as R. *Niſſim*, on the place, explains it, what is delivered in the *Maſorah*; yea, not only in the *Jeruſalem Talmud* * mention is made of it, but in the *Miſnah* [t] itſelf, finiſhed in the year 150, as a ſaying of R. *Akiba*, who died in the beginning of the ſecond century; "the *Maſorah* is an hedge "to the law;" the note of *Bartenora* on it is, the *Maſoreth*, which the wiſemen have delivered to us, concerning words defective and redundant in the law. I muſt be ſafe therefore in placing this work 100 years before the *Babylonian Talmud*, it certainly muſt be in being ſo early at leaſt, and much earlier; and *Walton*, an oppoſer of the points, acknowledges [u] that ſome part of the

|| Maſſech. Sopherim, c. 9. f. 5. 7. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 109. 2. & Gloſs in Ib. T. Bab. Kidduſhin, fol. 30. 1. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 103. 2. [s] T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37. 2. Megillah, fol. 3. 1. * Megillah, fol. 74. 4. [t] Pirke Abot, c. 3. f. 13. [u] Prolegom. 8. f. 12.

the *Maſoretic* notes were collected before the *Talmud* was finiſhed; and thinks it probable, that though not immediately after *Ezra*, yet about the time of the *Maccabees*, when the ſect of the *Phariſees* roſe, ſome might begin to make thoſe obſervations; and Dr. *Prideaux*† ſuppoſes that they began a little after the time of *Ezra:* now the obſervations of the *Maſoretes* were not only about entire words, nor about letters or conſonants, but alſo about the points and accents: take a few inſtances, inſtead of many which might be produced, on *Gen.* i. 5. the note of the *Maſorah* is, לאור is written ſeveral times with a *Kametz*; on *Gen.* xiv. 5. *Chedarlaomer*, one word with two *Shevahs*; and on *Exod.* xxxii. 6. it is obſerved the word לצחק is no more found with *Segol* and *Silluk*; on *Job* xix. 7. אענה is no more written with *Segol* and *Kametz*; and on *Pſ.* lxxxiv. 11. it is remarked, that אלהי is twice with a *Patach* and *Athnach*. See alſo on *Gen.* xvi. 13. and xix. 2. *Exod.* xxvi. 5. *Lev.* x. 4. 19. *Numb.* ix. 2. *Deut.* xviii. 17. *Joſh.* vi. 14. 1 *Sam.* x. 21. *Pſ.* xxvii. 4. *Jer.* xvii. 17. and iii. 32. *Dan.*

 i. 3.

† Connect. par. 1. B. 5 p. 353.

i. 3. and iii. 21. *Ezra* viii. 16. and other places; wherefore the points and accents muſt be before the *Maſoretes*, and not invented by them.

A. D. 385.

JEROM died in 420, being upwards of 90 years of age, and therefore muſt flouriſh about this time. He was the beſt verſed in *Jewiſh* literature of any of the antient writers, having had no fewer than four *Jews*, at different times for his inſtructors; and that he had knowledge of the points and accents, which therefore muſt be in his time, I think is moſt clear from his writings. I do not inſiſt upon the marks and figures of the vowel-points, which go along with the *Hebrew* words uſed by him, which I ſuppoſe are added by the editors of his works; though I confeſs, I cannot perſuade myſelf that ſo ſenſible and learned a man as *Jerom* was, would ever ſay what he does, unleſs not only he ſaw the *Hebrew* words he mentions, with the vowel-points to them, but put them to them himſelf, when he wrote them; though in length of time they might be diſuſed in the copies tranſcribed from him; for how

otherwiſe could he ſay, of ſuch and ſuch a word, it is not written ſo, but ſo, in the *Hebrew* text, and yet gives the word either way with the ſame conſonants exactly; ſo he gives the word במה, in *Iſ.* ii. 21. and others, as will be preſently obſerved: what is there then to diſtinguiſh them? or how could he expect to be believed, or to convince any by ſuch a method? this was to make him appear very ridiculous; but ſuppoſing the vowels put to the words by him, theſe would diſtinguiſh one word from another, and make him act like himſelf, and like a true critic; and this being the caſe, it is eaſy to account for it, why the vowel-points and accents are not mentioned by him, there being no need of it; ſince they were preſented to the eye of the reader, and ſuppoſed to be underſtood by him. However, the ſame *Hebrew* words expreſſed in *Roman* characters, I take for granted were done by himſelf, and this I think is owned by *Walton* *. I have indeed no other edition of his works, than that of *Eraſmus*, nor an opportunity of conſulting any other; now the words, as thus read, greatly agree with, and very rarely differ from

* Bibl. Polyglott. prolegom. 3. ſ. 47.

from the modern punctuation, and where they do, it may be owing to inadvertency, or to too great confidence in his memory, or to copiers; but be this as it may, it is certain he often ſpeaks of the *Hebrew* points and accents, and of the variety of them, and that the ſame words are pronounced by different ſounds and accents, and that *Hebrew* names are variouſly interpreted, according to the diverſity of accents, and change of the vowel-letters [w]; now, beſides the notice he takes [x] of the prick or point on the word *Kumah*, in *Gen.* xix. 34. which he calls pointing; he makes many obſervations on divers words, which manifeſtly ſhew his knowledge of the *Hebrew* points, without which he could never have made them: thus he obſerves [y], that in *Pſ.* xc. 8. in the *Hebrew* it is written עלמנו, *alumenu*, which he tranſlates *our neglects*, and wonders at the *Septuagint* interpreters, that they ſhould tranſlate it *our age*, as if it was *olamenu*; and now how could he ſay it was written in the *Hebrew*, *alumenu* and not

[w] Epiſt. ad Evagr. fol. 13. F. Tom. 3. Comment. in Ezek. c. 28. fol. 220. C. Tom. 5. & in Hagg. 1. fol. 101. & fol. 102. B. 1. 6. & in Epheſ. fol. 95. F. Tom. 9. [x] Quæſt. Heb. in Gen. fol. 68. 1. [y] Epiſt. ad Cyprian. fol. 33. B. Tom. 3.

not *olamenu*, ſince the word without points may be read either way, if he had not ſeen it himſelf, nor had been told that it was ſo pointed? nor could he ſay [z] that in *Exod.* xiii. 18. he found it written in the *Hebrew* volume, carefully examining its characters, *Hamuſim*, and not *Hamiſim*; if the *Hebrew* volume he examined had no points; for this he had not from tradition, nor from uſe and cuſtom of reading, but found it ſo written: he alſo obſerves [a], that the word שערים, written with the ſame letters, has a different ſignification, as it may be differently read; if *Searim* (i. e. with a *Kametz*) then it ſignifies *eſtimations*, but if *Seorim*, (i. e. with a *Cholem*) then it ſignifies *barley*; again [b] he remarks, that רעה, written with the ſame letters, if read *Re*, (i. e. with a *Shevah*) then it is a *friend*, if *Ro*, (i. e. with a *Cholem*) then it is a *Shepherd*; a like remark [c] he makes on the word במה, in *If.* ii. 22. that if it is rendered *wherein*, then it muſt be במה, *bameh*, but if an *high place* or *high*, then it muſt be read במה *bamah*; ſo the three letters זכר, when we ſay they ſignify *memorial*,

or

[z] Ep. Damaſo. 2 qu. fol. 12. A. B. [a] Quæſt. Heb. in Gen. fol. 70. 4. [b] Ib. fol. 72. C. [c] Comment. in If. c. 2. fol. 7. D. T. 5.

or *remembrance*, then he ſays[d] the word is read *zecer*, (i. e. with two *Segols*) but if a *male*, then it is read *zacar*, (i. e. with two *Kametzes*); again[e], theſe three letters דבר ſignify according to the quality of the places, if read *dabar* (i. e. with two *Kametzes*) it ſignifies a *word*, but if *deber*, (i. e. with two *Segols*) then it ſignifies the *plague*; ſo the word שקד, he obſerves[f], that if the accent is varied, that is the point, it ſignifies either a *nut* or *watching*; that is, if it is pointed for a verb, then it ſignifies to *watch*, but if as a noun, then it ſignifies a *nut*, an almond-nut. And whereas in the *Septuagint* verſion of *Jonah* iii. 4. it is three days inſtead of forty; *Jerom* wonders[g] how they ſhould ſo tranſlate, when there is no likeneſs in the *Hebrew* words, for *three* and for *forty*, neither in the letters nor in the ſyllable, nor in the *accents*, that is vowels; and again he obſerves[h], the ambiguity of the *Hebrew* word שני, which is written with three letters, י and נ and ש; if, ſays he, it is read *Shene* (i. e. with a *Shevah* and a *Tzere*) it

[d] Ib. in c. 26. fol 50. H. [e] Ib. in c. 9. fol. 19. H. & in Habac. c. 3. fol. 87. H. Tom. 6. [f] Comment. in Eccleſ. fol. 43. G. Tom. 7. & in Jerem. fol. 133. C. [g] Comment. in Jon. c. 3. fol. 57. M. [h] Comment. in Ezek. 15. fol. 194. C.

it ſignifies *two*, but if *Shane*, (i. e. with a *Kametz* and a *Tzere*) then it ſignifies *years*, and ſo in many other places. *Jerom* muſt have knowledge of the point placed ſometimes on the right hand of the letter שׁ, and then called *Yamin*, and ſometimes on the left hand of it, and then called *Smol*, which gives it a different pronunciation, and the words a different ſenſe: he obſerves[i], that from *Iſh*, a woman is rightly called *Iſha*, but *Theodotion*, he ſays, ſuggeſts another etymology, ſaying, ſhe ſhall be called *aſſumption*, becauſe taken from man; and, adds he, *Iſſa* may be interpreted *aſſumption*, according to the variety of the *accents*, that is, the points; his meaning is, that if the word is derived from נשׂא, with the point on the left hand, then it may ſignify *aſſumption*, ſince the word, ſo pointed, ſignifies to aſſume: again, *Berſabee*, he ſays[k], as differently *accentuated*, that is pointed, may be tranſlated the *well of the oath*, or the *well of ſatiety*, or of the *ſeventh*; the reaſon of which is, becauſe שבע with a point on the right of שׁ, ſignifies *ſeven*, and to *ſwear*; but with the ſame point on the left of

[i] Quæſt. Heb. ad Gen. fol. 65. I. [k] Comment. in Amos, c. 8. fol. 99. B.

of the letter, it ſignifies *fulneſs* and *ſatiety*; the ſame is obſerved by him in another place[l], that it has different ſenſes according to the variety of the accents. Now could *Jerom* poſſibly make ſuch obſervations as theſe without the knowledge of the points? for though from ſome of theſe paſſages it may be gathered, that unpointed books had been uſed, and ſo ſome were deceived thro' the ambiguity of words without points; yet how came it to paſs that he himſelf was not deceived? and how could he be ſure of the true *Hebrew* reading, if he had not ſeen pointed Bibles, or had not been taught that they were ſo pointed in ſuch and ſuch places? to ſuppoſe otherwiſe is quite incredible. And it appears alſo, that the punctuation in his time was the ſame with the modern punctuation, which he follows and ſcarce ever departs from; take, for inſtance, his reading the title of the 45th *Pſalm*, "Lamanazeah al "Soſannim, libne Corah, Maſchil ſir je-"didoth[m]"; there is but one point miſſing, and that is the *Shevah* in the firſt word, and which is ſometimes not pronounced, and

[l] Comment. in Iſ. c. 65. fol. 115. C. [m] Ad Principiam, fol. 34. F. Tom. 3.

and had no certain pronunciation with the antients; ſometimes by *a*, ſometimes by *i*, ſometimes by an *e*, as now uſually; according to the *Hebrew* grammarians, it has the nature of all the reſt of the vowels, and is equal to them, and pronounced like them, at certain times under certain conditions §. Three whole verſes in *Gen.* xvi. 18, 19, 20. are exactly pronounced according to the modern punctuation [n]; his verſion of the *Pſalms* agrees with the *Hebrew* text, as it now is, and as it is with the points: beſides what can he mean by ſaying [o], that he then in his old age could not read the *Hebrew* text by candle-light, ſince the letters were ſo ſmall, that they were enough to blind a man's eyes at noon-day? for the *Hebrew* letters, let them be wrote as ſmall as they well can be, can not be leſſer than the common *Roman* character; he muſt be underſtood ſurely of the ſmall pricks or points which belonged to the *Hebrew* letters. How came he to put *Adonai* inſtead of *Jehovah*, in *Exod.* vi. 3. if he is the author

§ Vid. Balmeſ. Heb. Gram. ſive Mikneh Abraham, p. 28. Sepher Coſri, par. 2. ſ. 80. & Muſcatum, in Ib. fol. 128. 1. & R. Judah Chijug, & Aben Ezra, in Muſcat.

[n] Ad Evagrium, fol. 13. 6. Ib.

[o] Proem. in Sept. Comment. in Ezek. c. 20. fol. 208. G.

thor of the *vulgate Latin* verſion, unleſs he knew that the *Jews* put the points of *Adonai* to *Jehovah?* There is a paſſage in *Jerom** which is produced by ſome to diſprove the knowledge and uſe of vowel-points in his time; when ſpeaking of *Enon* near *Salim*, "it matters not, he ſays, whether it be called *Salem* or *Salim*, ſince the "*Hebrews very ſeldom* make uſe of vowel-letters in the middle; and according to "the pleaſure of readers and the variety "of countries, the ſame words are pronounced with different ſounds and accents." Now *Jerom* is here to be underſtood either of the *Matres Lectionis* אוי; and it, is very true that theſe are ſeldom uſed in the ſacred books of the *Hebrews*, and which makes the uſe of vowel-points the more neceſſary; and if the *Matres Lectionis* were expunged upon the introduction of the points, as is ſuggeſted by ſome, then the points muſt have been before *Jerom*'s time, and conſequently not the invention of the men of *Tiberias*; ſince it ſeems the above letters were *rarely* uſed in his time as placed between conſonants, as *Dabar*, and other

* Epiſt. Evagrio, tom. 3. fol. 13. F.

other words obſerved by him ſhew: or elſe he is to be underſtood of vowel-points going along with letters; and theſe he might truly ſay, were *very rarely* uſed, becauſe pointed Bibles in his time were very rare: but then he ſuppoſes ſuch were uſed, tho' but ſeldom, and this Dr. *Owen* ° took to be his ſenſe; "either, ſays he, I cannot underſtand him, or he does poſitively affirm, that the *Hebrew*, had the uſe of "vowels, in his epiſtle to *Evagrius*;" upon which he obſerves, "if they did it *per raro*, they did it, and then they had "them; though, in theſe days to keep up "their credit in teaching, they did not "much uſe them; nor can this be ſpoken "of the ſound of vowels, for ſurely, they "did not *ſeldom* uſe the ſounds of vowels, "if they ſpoke often." And to this ſenſe, the words of *Jerom* are quoted by R. *Azariah* *; and from whence he concludes, that the points were really in being before his time, and ſo they are underſtood by others ‡; to ſay no more, as not only the vowel-points and accents are ſaid to be the

N in-

° Of the Divine Original of the Scriptures, p. 285.
* Imre Binah, c. 59. fol. 181. 1. ‡ Simeon de Mus, Joſeph. de Voyſin. apud Owen. Theologoumen. p. 412.

invention of the men of *Tiberias*, after the finiſhing of the *Talmud*, but the diſtinction of verſes alſo; it is certain, that *Jerom*, who lived a century or two before theſe pretended *Tiberians* are ſaid to live, frequently § ſpeaks of verſes in the *Hebrew* books, and diſtinguiſhed by him into colons and commas which the accents make; and of which mention is made before him in the *Jeruſalem Talmud*, and even in the *Miſnah*, as will be ſeen hereafter; yea, in the New Teſtament, *Luke* iv. 17. *Act.* viii. 32.

A. D. 370.

About this time lived *Epiphanius*, biſhop of *Cyprus*; he flouriſhed in the times of *Valens*, *Gratian*, and *Theodoſius*, and wrote a book againſt various hereſies; and among them takes notice of thoſe of the *Nicolaitans*, and their followers the *Gnoſticks*, &c. who had a ſort of deities they paid honour to, and which they called by barbarous names; and one of them was called *Caulaucauch*, a word taken from *Iſ.* xxviii. 13. as he obſerves; upon which he gives ‖ the text in *Hebrew*, thus, "*Saulaſau Sau-*
"*laſau*,

§ Præfat. in Joſuam, Paralipomen. Eſaiam & Ezekiel.
‖ Epiphan. contr. Hæreſ. l. 1. hæreſ. 25.

" *laſau, Caulaucauch, Caulaucauch, Zier-*
" *ſam, Zierſam,*" exactly agreeing with the preſent punctuation, only the *Sheva* in the laſt word is pronounced as an *i*; which may be owing to the copier, and is ſometimes not pronounced at all, as before obſerved, and when it is, it is differently: and very nearly to the ſame manner of pointing, is his quotation of *Pſ.* cx. 3, according to the *Hebrew* text, " *Merem meſſaar*
" *Lactal jeledecheth*[q]"; and ſo of *Iſ.* xxvi. 2, 3. the likeneſs is very great and much the ſame[r]. I ſuppoſe *Epiphanius* took theſe *Hebrew* paſſages from *Origen*'s *Hexapla*, a work in being in his time; and if ſo, this carries the punctuation ſtill higher; of which more hereafter. Moreover, the firſt word obſerved, was ſo pronounced by ſome hereticks, if not in the firſt, yet in the ſecond century.

## A. D. 360.

About this time lived *R. Aſe*, the head of a ſchool or academy at *Sura* in *Babylon*[s]; he is ſaid to write a large book concerning



[q] Ib. l. 2. hær. 65. [r] Ib. l. 3. hær. 76. vid. Montfaucon. Hexapla Origen. vol. 2. p. 130 [s] Vid. Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 33. 1. 2.

pointing, and the *cabaliſtic* ſecrets in it, which book *R. Nachman*[t], who lived about the year 1200, ſays, was then in their academy. Now if this *Rabbi* ſo early wrote a book about the points, they muſt then, and before that time be in uſe, and muſt have been ſome time before in uſe, to be reduced to an art, and brought under certain rules, and treated on at large.

A. D. 340.

About this time lived R. *Hillell*, the prince, the laſt of thoſe who was promoted to doctorſhip in the land of *Iſrael*, as before obſerved. Now R. *Zacuth*[u] ſpeaks of a copy of the book of 24, called the Bible, written by R. *Hillell*, by which all books were corrected in the year 956 or 984, (according to the *Jewiſh* account) and that he ſaw a part of it ſold in *Africa*, and that it had been written in his time 900 years, and obſerves that *Kimchi* ſays in his *grammar*, that the *Pentateuch* was at *Toletolo*, or *Toledo*. Some, as *Schickard*[w] and *Cunæus*[x], are of opinion, that this *Hillell*, was the famous

[t] Apud Buxtorff. de Punct. Antiq. par. 1. p. 55. [u] Juchaſin, fol. 132. 1. [w] Bechinat haperuſhim, p. 51. & Jus Reg. Heb. c. 2, theor. 5. ſ. 4. [x] De Republic. Heb. l. 1, c. 18.

famous *Hillell* that lived before the times of *Chriſt*, and flouriſhed 100 years before the deſtruction of the ſecond temple; and if ſo, ſince his copy was pointed, as will preſently be ſeen, it would prove the points to be as early; but he is more generally thought to be *Hillell* the prince, before-mentioned; for that he ſhould be a *Spaniſh Jew*, who lived about 600 years ago, as *Morinus*[y] ſuggeſts, is not credible; ſince it can't be thought he was an obſcure perſon, but of ſome note, from whom, for the ſake of honour, the copy had its name, and eſpecially as by it all copies were corrected; beſides, the above *Jewiſh* chronologer, who gives the account of it, ſays, the copy he ſaw had been written 900 years before his time, and he lived about the year 1500. Now this copy had the points, as is certain from what *Kimchi* ſays, who lived in the 12th century; he obſerves[z], that the word דרשו, in *Pſ.* cix. 10. is written with a broad *Kamets*, and in the copy of *Hillell*, at *Toletolo*, or *Toledo*, it is written concerning it in the *Maſorah*, that it is no where elſe with *Chateph*, i. e. with



[y] Exercitat. Bibl. l. 1. c. 2. p. 29.

[z] Comment. in Pſal. 109. 10.

*Kamets Chateph*; and in another work[a] of his, he ſays of the word תשומה, in 2 *Sam.* xiii. *Mem* is with *Segol*, which is not uſual, and is in the room of *Pathach*; and in the book of *Hillell*, which is at *Toletolo* or *Toledo*, it is with *Pathach*; and the learned *Mercer*[b] obſerves, that the word רעה, in *Prov.* xxiv. 14. is, in a M S. written with a *Tzere*, but in the margin it is remarked, that in *Hillell* it is written with a *Segol*. Wherefore the points muſt be annexed to the Bible as early as the times of *Hillell*, and before.

In the library at *Berlin* is a *Hebrew* MS. written by *Elias* the pointer, containing the *Pentateuch*, the 5 *Megillot*, with the book of *Job*, and ſome chapters out of the Prophets, with *Maſoretical* obſervations in the margin; which, if what is ſaid of it could be eſtabliſhed, it would be full as antient as *Hillell*'s copy: at the end of it the writer has put his name, and declares that he wrote it, and pointed it, and finiſhed it in the year fromthe creation of the world 4094; and *Andrew Mullerus*, ſometime provoſt at *Berlin*, wrote at the beginning of it,

[a] Sepher Shoraſh. rad. שום. [b] Comment. in Prov. xxiv. 14.

it, that this copy was written by *Elias* in the iſland of *Rhodes*, A. C. 334; but *La Croze** the late librarian, ſays, that at the end of the book there are manifeſt traces of letters blotted out, and others put in, and that the colour of the ink, and form of the parchment clearly ſhewed, that it could not then be written ſcarce 400 years.

THERE are ſeveral antient copies of the Bible pointed, but the preciſe age of them cannot be aſcertained. The *Jews* in *China*, have a very antient *Hebrew* Bible in *Pekin*, ſaid to be not at all differing from ours[c]; by which it ſhould ſeem that it is pointed, or otherwiſe it would differ. A copy called *Sinai*, a correct copy of the *Pentateuch*, has the accents, as *Elias Levita* acknowledges[d], who obſerves that the firſt word in *Exod.* xviii. 1. is with *Geraſhim*, but in *Sinai* with a *Rebiah*; and he alſo gives another inſtance of a different accentuation, but adds, that he knew not who was the compoſer of it. *R. Nachman*[e], who lived about the year 1200, ſays, he ſearched moſt diligently in all the *Babylonian*



* Apud Wolf. Biblioth. Heb. p. 166. 167. [c] Semedo's Hiſtory of China, par. 1. c. 5. [d] Sepher Shibre Luchot. [e] Apud Buxtorff. ut ſupra.

*Ionian* and *Jeruſalem* copies, and in *Hillell*'s, and could not find any where a *Dageſh* in thoſe three guttural letters, ח ה, ע, but found it in א, in three places, *Lev.* xxiii. 17. *Gen.* xliii. 26. and *Ezra* viii. 18. by which it appears, that not only *Hillell*'s copy, but the *Babylonian* and *Jeruſalem* copies were pointed. *Ben Melech*, on *Ezek.* xxiv. 10. obſerves, that *R. Jonah* writes, that he found the word *Harkach* with a *Kamets* under *He* in the *Jeruſalem* copy, but in the *Babylonian* copy, he found it with a *Pathach*. There was a *Jeruſalem* copy made mention of by ſeveral, that was a pointed one; *Muſcatus*[f] ſays, that the word אחד, in *Deut.* vi. 4. is pointed with *Segol* and *Kamets*, as it is found in the correct *Jeruſalem* copy; and ſo *Kimchi* affirms[g], that in the correct *Jeruſalem* copy, the word חיל, in *Job* xxix. 18. was with a *Shurek* for thoſe of *Nahardea*, and with a *Cholem* for the weſtern *Jews*; and ſeems to be the copy R. *Jonah* the grammarian, and *Maimonides*, who both lived in the 12th century, truſted to and depended on; and which the latter[h] calls the famous *Egyptian* copy, which was

[f] Comment. in Coſri, par. 4. fol. 230. 4. [g] Sepher Shoraſh. rad. חול. [h] Hilchot Torah, c. 8 f. 4.

was many years at *Jeruſalem*, and which *Ben Aſher* ſpent much time in correcting, who lived there a long time, as *Elias* ſays[i], and by which other copies were corrected; and this *Azariah*[k] conſulted, and ſays, it was in *Jeruſalem* from the times of the *miſnic* doctors, and had in it the *Tikkun Sopherim*, the ordination of the ſcribes, and the Bible-ſections open and ſhut.

## A. D. 300.

THE *Rabbot* are commentaries on the five books of *Moſes*, written by *Rabbi Bar Nachmoni*, who flouriſhed, according to *Buxtorff*[l], about this year. There are fifteen words which have unuſual pricks or points upon them, obſerved by the *Maſorah* and in the *Talmud*; ten of them in the law, four of them in the prophets, and one in the *Hagiographa*; thoſe in the law, moſt, if not all of them, are taken notice of in theſe commentaries[m]; in one* of

[i] Shibre Luchot & Præfat. 3. ad Maſoret. [k] Meor Enayim. c 9. fol. 52. 2. [l] Biblioth. Heb. p. 326. [m] Bereſhit Rabba, f. 48. fol. 43. 1. & f. 51. fol. 46. 1. & f. 78. fol. 68. 3. & f. 84. fol 73. 3. Bemidbar Rabba, f. 3. fol. 182. 2. * Bemidbar Rabba f. 3. fol. 182. 2. Abot R. Nathan, c. 34. vid. Aruch in voce קקל & Maaric Philip. Aquin. fol. 343. 2. who from hence concludes that *Ezra* put the points and accents.

of which are theſe words concerning them, " ſaid *Ezra*, if *Elijah* (another copy has " *Moſes*) ſhould come and ſay, why haſt " thou written them? I will ſay to him, " now have I pointed them; if he ſhould " ſay, thou haſt written well, I will im- " immediately remove the points from " them." In another of them, " expreſs " mention is made of the accents, *Neh.* " viii. 8. is thus paraphraſed, *they read in* " *the book of the law of God*, this is the ſcrip- " ture; *diſtinctly* this is the *Targum*; *and* " *gave the ſenſe*, theſe are the *accents*; and " *cauſed them to underſtand the reading*, " theſe are the heads of verſes."

## A. D. 230.

In this year the *Jeruſalem Talmud* was finiſhed, as is generally owned, though *Scaliger** places it in 370, and *Whiſton*§ in 369, in which the accents are made mention of[n]. The paſſage in *Neh.* is explained much in the ſame manner, as in the *Babylonian Talmud*, and in the *Rabbot* juſt now quoted; the diſtinction of the verſes is obſerved in it‖, which is made by the accent *Silluk*.

* De Emend. Temp. l. 7. P. 323. § Chronological Tables, cent. 19. [n] T. Hieroſ. Megiliah, fol. 74. 2. 4. ‖ Ib. fol. 75. 1. 2.

*Silluk.* In this *Talmud*‡ the double reading of a word in *Hag.* i. 8. is obſerved, which in the text is written ואכבד, but in the margin it is read ואכבדה; the one is according to the letters without the ה paragogic, the other according to the points with it, which, as *Schindler* ſays[n], is the true reading; for becauſe the point *Kametz* is under the laſt letter, the quieſcent letter ה is to be aſſumed, and ſo the word is to be read with ה paragogic; but if the word had no points at the time this *Talmud* was compiled, nor written with ה in any copies, why ſhould it be read, or directed to be ſo read? I have placed this *Talmud* here becauſe it is generally received, though ſome think it was not written ſo early, ſince mention is made in it of *Diocleſian* the king; and if the *Roman* emperor of that name is meant, it muſt be written in or after his time; though it appears from the *Talmud*° itſelf, that the *Doclet* or *Diocleſian* ſpoken of was, according to that, ſome petty king, that lived in the times of R. *Judah Hakkodeſh*, the compiler of the *Miſnah*, by whoſe chil-

‡ T. Hieroſ. Maccot, fol. 32. 1. & Taaniot, fol. 65. 1.
[n] Lexic. Pentaglott. col. 830 ° T. Hieroſ. Trumot, 46. 2, 3.

children he had been beaten, as pretended, and when he became a king, complained of it; which can not ſo well agree with the emperor *Diocleſian*: however, what is quoted from it, is a proof of the accents being mentioned in it, which ſome have denied, and for the ſake of which it is obſerved.

About this time flouriſhed that indefatigable writer *Origen*, who had knowledge of the *Hebrew* tongue, and is almoſt the only one of the antients that had, excepting *Jerom*. This writer, in one of his commentaries*, quotes the *Hebrew* reading of *Pſ.* cxviii. 25, 26. and agreeable to the preſent punctuation; in which he appears to be inſtructed by a *Jew*, ſince he puts *Adonai* inſtead of *Jehovah*, and by which it is evident that the *Jews* pointed as they do now. The ſame writer compoſed a work called *Hexapla*; which, had it been preſerved, would have been of great uſe in this controverſy about the antiquity of the *Hebrew* points; for in this work he placed in the firſt two columns, firſt the *Hebrew* text with its proper letters, and then the ſame in *Greek* characters: *Fabricius*[p] has given

* Comment. in Matth. p. 438, 439. Ed. Huet.
[p] Bibliothec. Græc. tom. 2. p. 346.

given a ſpecimen of it in the whole firſt chapter of *Geneſis*, collected out of the fragments of the antient *Greek* interpreters; and ſo has *Montfaucon*[q] after him; which I have compared with our pointed Bibles, and find it exactly agrees with our modern punctuation, with ſcarce any variation at all; take as a proof the firſt two or three verſes.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים | Βρεσιθ Βαρα Ελωιμ |
| אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ | Εθ ασαμαιμ ϰεθ ἀαρες |
| 2. וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ | ϰαἀρες αιεθα θωϰ ϰϐὼϰ |
| וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל פְּנֵי תְהוֹם | ϰχωσεκ ἀλ φνε θεωμ |
| וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל | ϰρεαχ Ελωιμ μραχεφεθ ἀλ |
| פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם | φνε αμαιμ |
| 3. | |
| וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי אוֹר | ειωμερ Ελωιμ ιει ωρ ϰιει ωρ |

The reſt of the ſpecimen, throughout the whole chapter, is agreeable to this; both *Fabricius* and *Montfaucon* have given another ſpecimen of the *Hexapla*, on *Hoſ.* xi. 1. the ſame which *Walton*[r] has tranſcribed from a copy of cardinal *Barberini*, from whom they ſeem to have taken it, which does not ſo exactly agree with the modern pointing as the other does; but *Montfaucon*[s] has given two more ſpecimens, one

[q] Hexapla Origen. Tom. 1. p. 2. &c. [r] Biblia Polyglott. Tom. 6. 72. Interpr. Ed. Roman. p. 133. [s] Præliminar. ad Hexapla. c. 1. p. 16.

one out of the *Octapla* of *Pſ.* ii. 6. and another out of the *Enneapla* of *Hab.* ii. 4. which perfectly agree with the preſent punctuation; and it is ſurpriſing they ſhould, when it is conſidered, that particularly the ſpecimen of the whole firſt chapter of *Geneſis* is collected from fragments preſerved in various writers, and thoſe but little ſkilled in the *Hebrew* language, and who ſometimes wrote differently one from another; and that theſe have paſſed through the hands of various copiers, entirely unacquainted with that language; and yet *Fabricius* complains not of any difficulty in collecting it; *Montfaucon* indeed does[t], and it is pretty much he ſhould, ſince he wrote after *Fabricius*; this ſhews that he did not conſult him, and that he had not his ſpecimen from him; and therefore it is the more ſurpriſing that they ſhould ſo nearly agree, the difference between them being chiefly not in the vowel-points, but in the powers of ſome few of the conſonant letters. With what preciſion and exactneſs, agreeable to the modern punctuation, may it reaſonably be ſuppoſed were the *Hexapla* of *Origen*, as firſt publiſhed by him, and

[t] Hexapla Gen. p. 14.

and as it would have appeared had it been preſerved; and who muſt have had a pointed Bible before him when he compoſed it; and the moſt exquiſite care, circumſpection and diligence muſt have been uſed by him, to obſerve every letter and every point, ſo as to write each word in *Greek* characters, and give them a proper regular pronunciation. Though I muſt confeſs, that ſince *Origen* was but indifferently ſkilled in the *Hebrew* language, as *Huetius*[x] has obſerved, and ſo father *Simon*[*]; I greatly ſuſpect he had, by ſome means or other obtained a copy of the *Hebrew* Bible, written in *Greek* characters, perhaps from a *Jew* with whom he was acquainted, well verſed in the *Hebrew* language, both letters and points; for it was allowed by the *Jews*[y] to write the *Hebrew* text in the characters of any language, though not to read it ſo written in their ſynagogues; and eſpecially they allowed of writing it in *Greek* characters, it may be for the uſe of the *Helleniſtic Jews*; nay they allowed the ſacred books to be written in *Greek* characters

[x] Origenian. l. 2. c. 1. ſ. 2. p. 26. [*] Diſquiſit. Critic. c. 9. p. 61. [y] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 115. 1. & Megillah, fol. 9. 1. & Debarim Rabba, ſ. 1. fol. 233. 1.

racters only, for ſo it is ſaid in the *Miſnah**, "there is no difference between the (ſacred) books, the Phylacteries, and *Mezuzah* (the parchments on the door-poſts) only that the books may be written in every tongue, but the Phylacteries and *Mezuzah* may not be written but in the *Aſſyrian* (i. e. in *Hebrew* characters). "*Rabbi Simeon Ben Gamaliel* ſays, they don't allow the books to be written but in *Greek*;" and the deciſion was, according to *Simeon*, as *Maimonides** obſerves; and who agreeable to this ſays, "they may not write the Phylacteries and *Mezuzah* but in *Aſſyrian* characters, but they allow the (ſacred) books to be written alſo in *Greek*, and in that only." I ſuſpect therefore, I ſay, that *Origen* lighted on one of thoſe copies, and what ſerves to ſtrengthen the ſuſpicion is, that in his *Hexapla*, *Adonai* is put for *Jehovah*, as the *Rabbins* read it§. Now what he did in compiling his *Hexapla*, was placing the ſeveral copies, as he found them, in order, in diſtinct columns as follows; firſt, the *Hebrew* text in *Hebrew* letters, as then in uſe with the *Jews*,

* Megillah, c. 1. f. 8. T. Hieroſ. Sabbat, fol. 15. 3.
* Tephillin, c. 1. s. 19. § Vid. Epiphan. contr. Hæreſ. 3. hær. 76.

*Jews*, as *Euſebius* aſſures[x], who doubtleſs ſaw the work itſelf; and next a copy of the ſame in *Greek* characters, he had ſomewhere met with; then followed the *Greek* verſions of *Aquila*, *Symmachus*, the *Septuagint*, and *Theodotion*: but be it in which way it may, whether the compoſition of the *Hebrew* copy in *Greek* characters, was *Origen*'s, or another's, it ſeems a clear caſe that a pointed Bible muſt then be in being, and was made uſe of; and that there was a regular punctuation, and that by the ſpecimen the preſent punctuation agrees with it; which obſervation ſufficiently confutes and deſtroys thoſe notions and vulgar miſtakes ſo generally received, of the invention of the points by the men of *Tiberias*, and of their being invented after the writing of the *Talmud*, and of their being unknown in the times of *Jerom*; all which muſt now be retracted.

A. D. 200.

In this century, and the preceding, lived the Rabbins of *Tiberias*, ſo frequently mentioned in the *Jeruſalem Talmud*, finiſhed in the year 230, as before obſerved; at this

O time

[x] Eccleſiaſt. Hiſt. l. 6. c. 16.

time as there were many ſynagogues of the *Jews* at *Tiberias*, ſo there was a famous academy; and now lived the true men of *Tiberias*, ſpoken of in *Jewiſh* writings, and at this time only, as to any number of them; for in the following century, univerſities and promotions ceaſed in the land of *Iſrael*. Theſe men, ſo famous in *Jewiſh* writings for their knowledge of the *Hebrew* language, and the purity and elegance of it, and the right manner of reading and pronouncing it, lived before the times of *Jerom*, and ſo not after the finiſhing of the *Talmud*, as *Elias* ſays; for *Jerom* manifeſtly refers to them, and to the ſentiments the *Jews* had of them, for their knowledge of the law, and the beauty and elegance of their language*. But though theſe men ſtudied the *Hebrew* language, and were very expert in it, and in the affair of pointing, yet they were not the inventors of the points; which may be concluded from what *Aben Ezra* ſays[y] of them; "I have ſeen, ſays he, the books "which the wiſe men of *Tiberias* examin-"ed, and fifteen of their elders gave it "upon

* Quæſt. ſeu Trad. Heb. in Gen. T. 3. fol. 73. I. K.
[y] Comment. in Exod. 25. 31.

" upon oath, that three times they dili-
" gently conſidered every word and every
" *point*, every full and deficient word, and
" behold, *Yod* was written in the word
" תיעשה", i. e. in *Exod.* xxv. 31. by which it appears that the Bible was not pointed by them, but pointed Bibles, which they had, were examined by them; ſo that pointed Bibles were in being before their time; they were pointed to their hands; they only ſearched into them, and ſtudied them, and became very expert and accurate in their knowledge of the points: hence the ſame writer, in another work [z] of his ſays, that from them, the men of *Tiberias* were the *Maſoretes*; from them we have the whole pointing; not that they were the authors and inventors of the points; but that by them they were handed down to them with great accuracy and exactneſs; for he expreſly ſays in another work of his *, that " the men of the great ſynagogue taught the people the ſenſe of the ſcriptures by the *accents*, and by the *kings* and *miniſters*; ſo he calls the



[z] Tzachut fol. 138, 2. apud Buxtorf. de Punct. Antiqu. p. 11. * Mozne Leſhon Hakodeſh apud Buxtorf. ib. p. 13, 14.

vowel-points, *Cholem*, *Shurek*, &c. and were inſtead of eyes to the blind; therefore in their foot-ſteps we go forth, them we follow, and on them we lean in all expoſitions of the ſcripture." But whatſoever ſkill the men of *Tiberias* might attain to in the ſtudy of the points, they appear to be very unfit for, and unequal to ſuch a work as the invention of them. Hear what Dr. *Lightfoot* [a] has obſerved of them, who was thoroughly acquainted with their characters, as to be learned from the above *Talmud*. "There are ſome who "believe the holy Bible to be pointed by "the men of *Tiberias*; I do not wonder "at the impudence of the *Jews* who in- "vented this ſtory; but I wonder at the "credulity of Chriſtians who applaud it. "Recollect, I beſeech you, the names of "the *Rabbins* of *Tiberias*, from the firſt ſi- "tuation of the univerſity to the time "that it expired; and what at length do "you find, but a kind of men mad with "*Phariſaiſm*, bewitching with traditions "and bewitched, blind, guileful, doting, "they muſt pardon me, if I ſay magical "and monſtrous? men how unfit, how unable,

[a] Works vol. ii. Chorograph. Cent. c. 81. p. 73. 74.

" unable, how fooliſh, for the undertak-
" ing ſo divine a work?" Then he gives the names of many of them, and obſerves their childiſhneſs, ſophiſtry, froth, and poiſon, and adds, " if you can believe the " Bible was pointed in ſuch a ſchool, be-" lieve alſo all that the *Talmudiſts* write. " The pointing of the Bible ſavours of " the work of the Holy Spirit, not the " work of loſt, blinded, and beſotted " men;" and elſewhere he ſays, " it is " above the ſkill of a mere man to point " the Bible; nay, ſcarcely a verſe as it is. " The ten commandments may puzzle all " the world for that ſkill."

As about this time, the univerſities both of *Tiberias* and *Babylon* were the moſt flouriſhing, it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed, that as they had each of them copies of the Bible, which they carefully examined, and preſerved for the uſe of the *Jews* in *Paleſtine* and *Babylon*, that now were made the various readings called *weſtern* and *eaſtern*, publiſhed at the end of ſome printed Bibles; the one for the *Jews* in their own land, called *weſtern*, and the other for the *Jews* in *Babylon*, called *eaſtern*. The dif-



* Erubhim, or Miſcellanies, c. 31. vol, i. p. 1014.

ference in number are 216, and none of them in the law; and they are moſtly very trivial, and chiefly about letters and words, but not altogether, for in two places, *Jer.* vi. 6. *Amos* iii. 6. they make mention of the point *Mappick*, in which the one copy differs from the other; ſo that *Elias*[b] is wrong, in ſaying that the differences are about words and letters only, but not about points and accents, and therefore he ſuppoſes they were made before the invention of the vowel-points and accents; but he is miſtaken, theſe were then in being. In *Lam.* v. 21. the *weſtern Jews* have the Tetragrammaton, *Jehovah*, but the *eaſtern* have *Adonai*; the former word, as it ſhould ſeem, having in their copy the points of the latter, as it ſometimes has, they put *Adonai* inſtead of it; which ſhews that the points then were.

A. D. 190.

CLEMENS of *Alexandria* lived and wrote about this time, and is thought to make mention of the *Hebrew* points and accents, where he ſays[c], there are ſome, who in reading,

[b] Præfat. 3. ad Maſoret. [c] Stromat. l. 3. p. 442.

reading, by the tone of the voice pervert the Scriptures to their own pleaſure, and by a tranſpoſition τινων προσωδιων και σιγμων (which *Sylburgius* his interpreter renders) *of certain accents and points*, what are wiſely and profitably commanded, force to their own liking;" in which he has reſpect to a text in *Mal.* iii. 15. and which he vindicates againſt ſome heretics of his time; but not to the *Greek* verſion of it, and the accents of that; for thoſe in the oppoſition ſay, there were no accents in the *Greek* tongue for ages after[d]; but to the *Hebrew* text, and the points and accents in that; and the rather this may be ſuppoſed, ſeeing it appears in ſeveral parts of his writings, that he had ſome knowledge of the *Hebrew* tongue.

A little before *Clemens*, *Irenæus* wrote, who, tho' he had but a ſmall degree of knowledge of the *Hebrew* language, yet ſomething of it he



[d] Some ſay they began in the 7th century, vid. Velaſti Diſſert. de Lit. Græc. Pronunciat. par 4. c. 2 p. 95. Romæ, 1751. It it ſaid the ancienter the MSS. are, the fewer are the accents, and that thoſe which exceed a thouſand years have none at all, Mirtiſb. Sarpedon (alias Frideric Reiſſenberg). Diſſert. de Vera Attic. Pronunciat par. 3. c. 1. p. 48. Romæ, 1750; but Gregorius Placentinius makes them much more ancient. See his Epitome Græc. Paleograph. c. 11. p. 88 Romæ, 1735. The controverſy about the Greek accents has been of late years revived at Rome.

endeavoured to get, that he might anſwer the heretics of his time, who were fond of introducing foreign words and their ſignifications into their ſchemes. The firſt and ancient *Hebrew* letters, he ſays [e], were but ten; which *Feuardentius* his annotator explains of the ten from *Aleph* to *Yod* incluſive, becauſe theſe were the firſt and chief from whence all the reſt were formed; and indeed the *cabaliſtic Jews* [f] ſay the *Yod* is the beginning of all letters; and *Hermannus Hugo* [g] obſerves, that all the *Hebrew* characters are compoſed from the ſingle letter *Yod* variouſly joined together; but *Irenæus* adds, "that every one "of the letters are written by fifteen, the "laſt letter coupled to the firſt." "Now what he means by *fifteen* Dr. *Grabe* ſays he could not deviſe. I ſuſpect he means the fifteen vowel-points, as ſome *grammarians* [h] reckon them, and call them five long, five ſhort, and five moſt ſhort, which *Irenæus* might have ſome knowledge of from thoſe who taught him the little *Hebrew* he had; for that he conſulted the *Rabbins* of his time

[e] Adv. hæreſ. l. 2. c. 41. [f] R. Abraham Dior. in Jetzirah p. 58. Ed. Rittangel. [g] De prima Scribendi Orig. c. p. 64. [h] Vid. Balmeſii Mikneh Abraham p. 25. lin. 3. & 26. lin. 6.

time is clear from what he before ſays of the *Hebrews* and their language, " Sicut " periti eorum dicunt :" and it is obſervable that in his time *Hebrew* words were read and pronounced according to the modern pointing; as for inſtance, קו לקו is read not *Culacu* nor *Coloco*, as moſt natural, without points; but *Caulacau* [i], as it is in our pointed Bibles in *Iſ.* xxviii. 13. and was read ſo before his time by the heretics he oppoſes. There are other words in *Irenæus* [k] which agree with our modern punctuation, as *Sabaoth*, *Eloa*, *Adonai:* and here I cannot forbear obſerving, that *Philo Byblius* [l], who lived half a century at leaſt before *Irenæus*, in tranſlating *Sanchoniatho*'s hiſtory out of the *Phœnician* language, reads אלהים, his author's word no doubt, in *Greek* Ελωειμ, as *Jerom* [m], *Baſil* [n], and *Epiphanius* [o], in the fourth century read it *Eloim*; and *Origen* before them, as the ſpecimen of his *Hexapla* given above ſhews. This very antient way of reading and pronouncing *Elohim*, as it agrees with the

[i] Adv. hæreſ. l. 1. c. 23. [k] Ib. l. 2. c. 66. [l] Apud Euſeb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 37. [m] Epiſt. Marcellæ fol. 31. A. Tom. 3. Quæſt. Heb. in Gen. fol. 66. E. [n] Adv. Eunom. l. 1. [o] Contr. Hæreſ. l. 1. Hæreſ. 40.

the modern punctuation, ſo it may be obſerved againſt the *Hutchinſonians*, who ſometimes write and pronounce it *Elahim* and ſometimes *Aleim*, as *Maſclef* alſo does.

A. D. 150.

In this year, or about this time, the *Miſnah* or book of Traditions was finiſhed, which *R. Judah Hakkodeſh* collected together, that they might not be loſt; and it muſt be written ſo early, ſince by the unanimous conſent of *Jewiſh* writers, it was compiled by this *Rabbi*, who flouriſhed in the times of *Antoninus Pius*, with whom he was very familiar. Some Chriſtian writers indeed place it at the beginning of the ſixth century, or at the end of the fifth, and others at the end of the fourth; but no good reaſon can be given why the *Jews* ſhould antedate this book, for whoſe uſe only it was written. There is not one *Rabbi* mentioned in it but lived before *R. Judah*, the ſuppoſed compiler of it; nor is there any chronological character in it that brings it lower than the times of *Adrian* the predeceſſor of *Antoninus*,

*ninus*, whoſe name is once mentioned in it [p]; therefore *Maimonides* * thinks the *Miſnah* was compoſed about his time. Now the *Jews* had been very much harraſſed in the times of *Trajan* and *Adrian*, but obtained ſome favour and eaſe in the times of *Antoninus*; and having more eaſe and leiſure, it was the fitteſt opportunity of ſetting about this work of collecting their traditions from ſeveral parts; which were put together by the above *Rabbi*, that they might not be loſt: according to the author of *Coſri* [a], this year 150 is the year 150 from the deſtruction of the ſecond temple, which brings it to the year of *Chriſt* 220; but *R. Abraham Ben David*, [b] and *R. Menachem* [c] place the *Miſnah* in 120 from the deſtruction, which is A. D. 190; but *Morinus* [d] himſelf owns that *Rabbenu Hakados* compiled the *Miſnaiot* or traditions almoſt two hundred years before the council of *Nice*, and that council was but little more than three hundred years after

[p] Avodah Zarah, c. 3. f. 3. * Comment. in Ib. [a] Par 3. c. 67. ſo R. Serira in Juchaſin fol. 115. and R. Azariah Meor Enayim c. 24. fol. 95, 1. [b] Sepher Cabala. [c] Apud Ganz Tzemach David, par 1. fol. 30, 2. [d] De ſinceritate Heb. Text. l. 1. Exercit. 1. c. 2. p. 17.

after the birth of *Chriſt*. The general regard paid to the *Miſnah* by the *Jews* in all parts, in *Paleſtine* and in *Babylon*, the puzzle the *Gemariſts* are at in many places to underſtand it, many of the traditions in it being the ſame that are obſerved or referred to in the New Teſtament, are proofs of the antiquity of it; and though it is denied, yet it is moſt clear that *Jerom* had knowledge of it as a written book; his words are, that[q] "the traditions of the "*Phariſees* are what to this day are called "δευτερωσεις (ſecondary laws or the *Miſ*- "*nah*, and are ſuch old wives fables, that "I cannot bear *evolvere* to turn them over; "for neither will the bigneſs of the book "admit of it, and moſt of the things in "it are ſo filthy that I am aſhamed to ſpeak "of them;" in which he not only gives the work its proper name, a ſecondary law or *Miſnah*, but ſpeaks of it as a *book*, and of a conſiderable bulk, it being bigger than our New Teſtament, and there are things in it which agree with the character he gives of it, and ſuch as well deſerved his cenſure, as Dr. *Wotton* * thinks; though

[q] Epiſt. Algaſiæ Qu. 10. fol. 55. I. Tom. 3. * Miſcellaneous Diſcourſes, &c. p. 94.

though I muſt confeſs in this I am of a different mind; but chuſe rather to ſubſcribe to what the learned *Wagenſeil* ſays *, that in the *Miſnah* as abſtracted from the *Gemara*, "there is no fable nor apologue in it, nor any thing very fooliſh, nor very remote from reaſon; it contains mere laws and traditions." *Jerom* therefore ſays this upon hearſay, and it is plain by his own words he had not read it; or, it may be, rather he refers to the *Jeruſalem Talmud*, which conſiſts both of the *Miſnah* and *Gemara*; and not only the matter but the bulk of the book *Jerom* ſpeaks of better agrees with that, which is a large folio; and being finiſhed in the year 230, as before obſerved, there was time enough for *Jerom* to have knowledge of it; however, I think it is beyond all doubt, that there was a collection of the *Jewiſh* traditions called in his time *Miſnah* or *Miſnaiot*, and that this was a written book, in ſome form or another, either by itſelf or with the *Gemara*, of which *Jerom* had knowledge; and that *Jerom* ſaw the *Miſnah* itſelf is the opinion of the learned Dr. *Bernard* in his letter to the biſhop of *Fern*, prefixed to the

* Præfat ad Tela Ignea, p. 57, 58.

the *Miſnah* of *Surenhuſius* †; and *Jerom* in the ſame epiſtle makes mention of the *Miſnic* doctors by name, as *Rab*, *Akiba*, *Simeon*, and *Hillell*, who delivered to the *Jews* the tradition of walking 2000 feet on a ſabbath day; and a little after he ſays, "on certain days when they (the *Jewiſh* "doctors) explain their traditions they "uſually ſay to their diſciples, οι σοφοι "δευτερωσιν, that is, the wiſe men teach "the traditions," than which no words can more fully and fitly expreſs or give a better tranſlation of the phraſes תנו רבנן *Our Rabbins teach*, that is, in the *Miſnah*, and תני רבי ſuch a *Rabbi teaches*, that is, in the *Miſnic* way; phraſes to be met with in innumerable places in *Talmudic* writings [r]; which ſhews the knowledge *Jerom* had of them, and that they were in being before his time; and hence it is, that the wiſe men are called *Tanaim*, *Miſnic* doctors, and the *Miſnah* itſelf *Mathnitha*, tradition, inſtruction, doctrine. The *Miſnic* doctors are frequently called *wiſe men* in

† Videret equidem aliquando opus illud Miſnicum Rector Bethleemiticus, &c. Vid. Triglandium de ſecta Karæorum c. 9. p. 123. who is of the ſame opinion. [r] See the meaning of theſe phraſes in Halicot Olam, p. 35, 39. Ed. L' Empereur.

in it. The moſt famous of them for their doctrines, debates, and deciſions in the *Miſnah* were well known to *Jerom*, and their names and the order of time in which they lived, are given by him: "The *Nazarites*, ſays he,[s] interpret the "two houſes (*If.* viii.) of the two fami- "lies of *Sammai* and *Hillell*, from whom "ſprung the Scribes and Phariſees, in "whoſe ſchool *Akiba* ſucceeded, thought "to be the maſter of *Aquila* the proſe- "lyte, and after him *Meir*, ſucceeded by "*Johanan* the ſon of *Zaccai*, after him "*Eliezer* and then *Delphon* (*Tarphon* I "ſuppoſe is meant) and again *Joſeph* the "*Galilean*, and *Joſhua* unto the captivity "of *Jeruſalem*. *Sammai* and *Hillell* "therefore did not ariſe in *Judea* much be- "fore the Lord was born; the firſt of "which ſignifies a *diſſipator*, and the other "*prophane*; becauſe that by their traditions "and ſecondary laws (or *Miſnic* doctrines) "they diſſipated and deſpiſed the precepts "of the law; and theſe are the two houſes "which did not receive the Saviour." It is obſervable in this paſſage, that *Jerom* calls

[s] Comment. in Eſaiam, c. 8. fol. 17. I. Tom. 5.

calls the ſchools of *Hillell* and *Shammai*, which make ſo conſiderable a figure in the *Miſnah*, houſes and families, which is the very name they go by in the *Miſnah* hundreds of times, as בית *Hillell* and בית *Shammai*. So *Jerom* elſewhere [t] calls the *Jewiſh* fables and traditions, δευτερωσεις ſecondary laws, as is alſo before obſerved, and anſwers to *Miſhnaiot*, the very name by which their book of traditions is called: and *Euſebius* [u], who lived before *Jerom*, makes mention of the *Deuterotæ* or *Miſnic* doctors among the *Jews*, by which name *Jerom* * often calls the Phariſees, who were traditionary men, retailers of traditions, and the authors of the *Miſnah*; and by the ſame name he calls one of the *Rabbins*, that inſtructed him in the *Hebrew* tongue †, and from whom, with others, he became acquainted with many things now to be met with in the *Miſnah* and *Talmud*; and this accounts for *Jerom*'s knowledge of the *Miſnah*, which might not be known by thoſe who were his cotemporaries; and which

[t] Comment. in Eſaiam c. 59. fol. 103. in Ezek. c. 36. fol. 235. H. & in Matt. 22. fol. 30. M. Epiſt. ad Damaſum, T. 3. fol. 40. A. [u] Præpar. Evangel. l. 11. c. 5. * In Eſaiam, c. 3. fol. 9. C. & c. 10. fol. 20. D. & c. 29. fol. 57. C. Tom. 5. † In Habacuc. c. 2. fol. 85. D. Tom. 6.

which need not be wondered at, ſince the book was written purely for the uſe of the *Jews*, and was not deſigned to be made public to others; and it was only thro' *Jerom*'s acquaintance with ſome *Jewiſh Rabbins* his preceptors, that he came to have any notion of it; wherefore *Auſtin* not knowing it was committed to writing *, is no objection to it, ſince it might be written, and he be ignorant of it, he having no correſpondence with the *Jews*, as *Jerom* had: and it may be further obſerved, that of the *Miſnic* doctors ſome lived before the birth of *Chriſt*, and ſome after, yet before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and others after that, but all before R. *Judah Hakkodeſh*, the laſt of them, and who compiled the *Miſnah* about the date given; and it may alſo be obſerved, that whereas ſome of theſe men lived before this date ſome conſiderable time, in courſe, their debates and deciſions about any matter muſt be reckoned as early; ſo that the diſcourſe between two *Rabbins* I ſhall preſently produce, founded upon punctuation, who lived about, or a little af-

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* Opera T. 6. contr. Adverſar. Leg. & Proph. l. 2. c. 1. p. 256.

after, the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, carries the affair of punctuation higher than the date fixed [w], even into the firſt century.

THE *Miſnah*, according to the *Jews*, was pointed. *Ephodeus* [x] ſays, you will find all the ancient copies of the *Miſnah* written with points and accents; and R. *Azariah* [y] affirms, that he ſaw two copies of the *Miſnah* more than 500 years old, with points and diſtinguiſhing accents; and in the *Miſnah* not only mention is made of verſes in the Bible, and how many to be read at a time [z], by which it appears that the ſacred books were diſtinguiſhed into verſes ſo early, but the points are manifeſtly referred unto. Two doctors are introduced [a] as diſputing about the reading of the text in *Cant.* i. 2. Says R. *Joſhua*, brother *Iſhmael* how doſt thou read the words, דודיך or דודיך? that is, whether he read the word with a maſculine or feminine affix; and ſo, whether it was the congregation or church that ſpoke to God, or

[w] Vid. Halicot Olam, c. 2. p. 19, 26, 228. & Pocock. Port. Moſis, p. 120. [x] Apud Buxtorf. de Punct. Antiqu. p. 78. [y] Meor Enayim, c. 59. fol. 180, 2. [z] Megillah, c. 4. f. 4. [a] Avodah zarah, c. 2. f. 5.

or whether it was God that ſpoke to the church? now this could not be determined by the letters or conſonants which are the ſame; but by the vowel-points, which diſtinguiſh the affixes: according to *R. Iſhmael* it was to be read feminine דּוֹבֵךְ as if ſpoken by God to the church; but this *R. Joſhua* denied; Not ſo, ſays he, but דּוֹבֵךְ maſculine, and ſo ſpoken by the church to God. Now though theſe two *Rabbins* might have an unpointed bible before them, yet the foundation of their reaſoning lay in the points; for their diſpute was not barely how the word was *pronounced*, but how it was *read*; and it is obſervable, that it is the modern punctuation of this word that is by this inſtance eſtabliſhed; to which may be added, that the *Maſoreth* is expreſly made mention of in the *Miſnah* [b] as the hedge of the law, one branch of which is concerned with the points and accents, and to the authors of it thoſe that oppoſe the points aſcribe them. Now R. *Akiba*, whoſe ſaying this is, flouriſhed about eighty years after Chriſt, and died in the year 120, in the



[b] Pirke Abot, c. 3. f. 13. vid. Leuſden in ib.

war of *Adrian* againſt the *Jews*; in whom the glory of the law is ſaid to ceaſe, becauſe he gave his mind to ſearch out the meaning of every *apex*, tittle, and point in it, as it was foretold of him that he ſhould *: the extraordinary point in the letter ה in רחוקה, *Numb.* ix. 10. is obſerved in the *Miſnah* †.

A. D. 120.

About this time, according to the *Jewiſh* chronology [c], lived *Simeon Ben Jochai* a diſciple of R. *Akiba* author of the book of *Zohar*; the authority and antiquity of which book is not called in queſtion by any of the *Jews*, no not by *Elias Levita* himſelf, who firſt aſſerted the points to be the invention of the men of *Tiberias*; yet declared [d], if any one could convince him that his opinion was contrary to the book of *Zohar*, he ſhould be content to have it rejected. What may be urged in favour of the antiquity of that book, is not only, that the perſons introduced ſpeaking in it, and whoſe

* Miſn. Sotah, c. 9. f. 15. Bartenora in ib T. Bab. Menachot fol. 29, 2. † Peſachim, c. 9. f. 2. [c] Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol 30, 1. [d] Præfat. 3. ad Maſoret.

whoſe ſayings are recorded, were as early or earlier than the time to which it is placed; but the neatneſs of the language in which it is written, which far exceeds any thing written after this time; as alſo there being no mention made of the *Talmud* in it, though there[c] is of the *Targums* of *Onkelos* and *Jonathan*. Some things objected to its antiquity may be only interpolations. R. *Azariah* ſays *, it was written before the *Miſnah* was compiled. According to *Maſius* † it was written a little after the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*. Now in this book it is ſaid, "the letters "are the body, and the points are the ſpi- "rit or ſoul;" and the text in *Dan.* xii. 3. is thus paraphraſed, *they that be wiſe ſhall ſhine*, the letters and points; *as the brightneſs*, the modulation of the accents; *they that turn many to righteouſneſs*, theſe are the pauſes of the accents[f]; ſo *Nehemiah* viii. 8. is interpreted in it, of the pauſes of the accents, and of the *Maſoreth*[g]; and in another place[h] "*Jehovah* is called "*Elohim*, becauſe he is the river of mer-

 cies;

[c] Zohar in Gen. fol. 61, 1. * Imre Binah, c. 59. fol. 179, 2. † Comment. in Joſh. 1, 3. [f] Zohar in Gen. fol. 1, 3. [g] In Exod. fol. 82, 4. [h] Ib. in Lev. fol. 4, 3. Ed. Sultzbach.

cies ; and it is written mercy, and pointed " by *Elohim*;" yea, the very names of the points and accents are mentioned in it in various places [j], as *Cholem*, *Schurek*, *Chirek*, *Pathach*, *Segol*, *Sheva*, *Kametz*, *Tzere*, *Zarkà*, *Segolta*, *Shalſhelet*, &c. and elſewhere mention is made of the ſeven vowels, which are by grammarians called *Kametz*, *Tzere*, *Chirek*, *Cholem*, *Shurek*, *Pathach*, *Segol*; ſo ſome of the extraordinary points or pricks, on certain words are obſerved in it, as that on the word for *he kiſſed him*, *Gen.* xxxiii. 4. and on the word for *afar off*, in *Numbers* ix. 10. [l]; the double letters in the *Hebrew* tongue, the pronunciation of which depends upon the points, are made mention of in this book [m].

## A. D. 100.

In the time before this date, or in the firſt century, the *Targums* of *Jonathan* and *Onkelos* were written ; the one is upon the

[j] Ib. in Gen. fol. 1, 2. & 26, 3. & 38. 1. 2. & 71, 2. Tikkune zohar præfat. fol. 6, 2. & 7, 1. [l] Ib. in Gen. fol. 98, 4. [m] In Gen. fol. 38, 1.

the prophets, and the other upon the Pentateuch, and are by *Buxtorf* * ſaid to be the moſt ancient books of all the *Hebrews*, *Jonathan* flouriſhing a little before Chriſt, and *Onkelos* a little after; though ſome write that they knew one another; however, they were in this century: it is certain alſo there was a *Targum* on *Job*, as ancient † as R. *Gamaliel*, the maſter of the Apoſtle *Paul*; and *Onkelos* muſt be cotemporary with him, if what is ſaid ‡ is true, that he burnt at *Gamaliel*'s funeral as much as was worth ſeventy *Tyrian* pounds. The *Targums* are now in our printed bibles pointed; but whether they were ſo when firſt written cannot be ſaid. *Elias Levita* [n] is very poſitive and ſays, without doubt the *Targumiſts* wrote their paraphraſes without points; and affirms alſo, that they were not pointed by the *Maſoretes*, but by men of note long after their time; but this is all ſaid to ſerve an hypotheſis of his own, that there was no pointing before the men of *Tiberias*;



* Biblioth. Rabbin. p. 293. † T. Hieroſ. Sabbat, fol. 15, 3. ‡ T. Bab Avodah zarah ſol. 11, 1.
[n] Præfat. ad Methurgeman, fol. 2, 1.

that the points of them were then in a corrupt ſtate, and very irregular; and ſo indeed *Buxtorf*[a] found them, and took great pains to reſtore them; and which not only ſuppoſes their being, but it may be that ſuch a ſtate was owing to their great antiquity and the long neglect of them. With ſome *Jewiſh* commentators *Jonathan* is obſerved in ſome places to tranſlate and paraphraſe according to the points. *Kimchi* on 2 *Sam.* xix. 14. obſerves, that inſtead of *he bowed*, *Jonathan* renders it paſſively, *was bowed*, by which it ſeems, he ſays, that he read וימ with a *Tzere* under *Yod*, but the *Maſorah* teſtifies of it that it is with a *Patach* under the *Yod*; and on *Hoſ.* v. 15. he remarks, that in the word יאשמו the *Aleph* and *Shin* are with a *Sheva*, agreeable to which is the *Targum* of *Jonathan*; and *Jarchi* on *Ezek.* xxvii. 16. obſerves, that as to the point *Dageſh*, *Jonathan* explains the word that has it ſometimes literally, and ſometimes allegorically; for in that way he ſometimes paraphraſed otherwiſe than in the copy before him; ſo the *Jeruſalem Targumiſt* on *Gen.* xiv. 5. what *Onkelos* and *Pſeudo-Jonathan* take for the proper name

[a] Præfat. ad Bibl. Heb.

name of a place, he inſtead of *Zuzim* in *Ham*, has it, the *illuſtrious ones among them*; and ſo it is quoted in *Bereſhit Rabba* [a], on which the commentator [b] obſerves, that *Zuzim* is allegorically explained, as if it had the ſignification of ſplendor and luſtre, and *Beham*, which is with a *Kametz*, as if it was written with a *Segol*; but if the points were not then known, there could be no foundation for ſuch an allegorical interpretation. *Capellus* [c] himſelf owns, that *Jonathan* and *Onkelos* made uſe of an *Hebrew* copy different from what the *Septuagint* did, and almoſt the ſame we now have from the *Maſoretes*; and indeed *Onkelos* ſcarce ever departs from the modern punctuation, and it will be difficult to produce a ſingle inſtance proving that he uſed an unpointed Bible.

## A. D. 70.

*Joſephus*, the famous *Jewiſh* hiſtorian, flouriſhed about this time. Scarce any thing can be expected from him concerning the *Hebrew* Points, who wrote in *Greek*, and conformed *Hebrew* words to the

[a] Paraſh. 42 fol. 37, 2. [b] In Mattanot Cehunnah in ib. [c] Critica, p. 324.

the genius of that language, and who read and pronounced conſonants, as well as vowels, different from the *Hebrew* words. There is a paſſage of his which is thought to militate againſt the antiquity and neceſſity of the vowel-points, when he ſays [d], that the ſacred letters engraven on the mitre of the high prieſt, meaning the word *Jehovah*, are *four vowels*; which are ſuppoſed to be a ſufficient number of vowels for the *Hebrew* language, at leaſt, if another or two are added to them: but, to take off the force of this objection, if there is any in it, let it be obſerved, 1ſt. *Joſephus*'s want of ſkill in the *Hebrew* tongue, with which he is charged by ſome learned men; the *Syro-Chaldean* language being commonly ſpoken by the *Jews* in his time, and which, perhaps, may ſerve alſo to account for his different pronunciation of *Hebrew* words in ſome places. 2dly, What he calls vowels, and which ſome think may be uſed inſtead of vowels, are allowed by the ſame to have alſo the power of conſonants; and it is certain, that the *Vau*, was uſed as a conſonant before, and in the times of *Joſephus*; ſo *David*

[d] De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 5. ſ. 2.

*vid* is read Δαεὶδ, in *Matt.* i. 1. 6. & *paſſim*, and in the very name *Jehovah* he ſpeaks of; for the *Samaritans*[e] pronounced it *Jabe*; and ו and ב are ſometimes changed for one another in the *Hebrew* language, as in *Bathſhua* for *Bathſheba*, 1 *Chron.* iii. 5. and *Joſephus* muſt have known that the *Yod* is uſed in the Bible as a conſonant, in a multitude of proper names of men and places, and in other words, and even in his own name. 3dly, If the ſacred name *Jehovah* conſiſted of vowels only, it could not be pronounced; for as conſonants cannot be pronounced without vowels, ſo neither can vowels without conſonants; and though the word is by the *Jews* ſaid to be ineffable, yet not becauſe it could not be pronounced, for it was pronounced by the blaſphemer in the times of *Moſes*, by *Hiram*, by the former wiſe men to their children once a week *, and by the high prieſt in the ſanctuary, as they allow[f]; but becauſe as they thought it was not lawful to pronounce it, at leaſt in common, as ſay both

[e] Theodoret. in Gen. Qu. 15. vid. Epiphan. contra Hæreſ. l. 1. hær. 40. * T. Bab. Kidduſhin, fol. 71, 1.
[f] Miſn. Sotah, c. 7. f. 6. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 39, 2.

both *Philo*[g] and *Joſephus*[h]; and ſo in the *Miſnah*[i], he is ſaid to have no part in the world to come who pronounces the name *Jehovah* with its own letters. When the ancient *Greek* writers ſay it is unutterable, as the author of *Delphi Phœnicizantes* obſerves[k], it is only as written by the *Greeks*, who ſcarce admit of υ as a conſonant, and cannot expreſs aſpirates in the middle and end of a word, as this word requires; but then he adds, not becauſe it cannot be pronounced, for it may be pronounced according to the *Hebrew* letters, with which it is written. 4thly, The three letters in the name *Jehovah*, for there are no more in it of a different kind, can at moſt be only conſidered as *matres lectionis*, as they are called, and ſo uſed in the room of vowels; but then theſe are often wanting in the *Hebrew* text, and in places where they might be expected, and where their preſence would be neceſſary, if this were their uſe, and there were no other vowels or vowel-points, and therefore are inſufficient to ſupply the place of them. 5thly

[g] De vita Moſis, l. 3. p 670. [h] Antiqu. l. 2. c. 12. f. 4. [i] Sanhedrin, c. 11. f. 1. [k] Dickinſon, c. 6. p. 57.

5thly, After all, γραμματα and φωνηεντα are the ſame in *Joſephus* as in the *Greek* epigram in *Euſebius* [l], and they the ſame with φωνη the human and articulate voice, which, as *Capellus* [m] obſerves, conſiſts not of vowels only, but of conſonants alſo; and both in the one as in the other, the tetragrammaton, or the name of four letters, *Jehovah* is thought to be meant; or of ſeven letters, four conſonants and three vowel-points; hence *Scaliger* [n] ſays, "there is no neceſſity "by φωνηεντα to underſtand vowels, in "the above *Greek* epigram, ſince *Joſephus* "expreſly calls the four letters of the te- "tragrammaton φωνηεντα, whence it appears "that any letters may be ſo called;" and *Joſephus*'s view in the obſervation he makes was not to tell us what ſort of letters they were that were upon the mitre of the high prieſt, whether vowels or conſonants; but that it was the tetragrammaton or name of four letters, that was written upon it, uſing the language of his own nation, and which continues in uſe to this day; wherefore both *Selden* [o] and *Braunius* [p] render the paſſage in *Joſephus* thus, "about "it

[l] Præpar. Evangel. l. xi. c. 6. [m] Orat. de Nom. Tetragram. p. 172. [n] In Fragm. ad Calcem lib. de Emendat. Temp. p. 34. [o] De Succeſ. in Pontif. Ebr. l. 2. c. 7. [p] De Veſtitu Sacerd. Heb. l. 2. c. 22. f. 18. p. 811.

" it (the mitre) was another golden crown " bearing ſacred letters, that is, the name " tetragrammaton." *Philo* calls them the four engravings of the name, and the engravings of the four letters, and this, ſays he, divines call tetragrammaton †. Moreover, though *Joſephus* does not make expreſs mention of the *Maſorah* in his writings, yet *Arias Montanus* [q] thinks, he never could have ſo confidently ſaid what he ſaid without the help of it; as when he ſays [r], in ſuch a ſpace of time that was paſt, meaning from *Moſes*, " no man dared " to add, nor to take away, nor to " change *any thing* in the ſcriptures, chuſing " rather to die;" and the ſame ſays *Philo* the *Jew* [s], who lived in the ſame age, and a little before him, that the *Jews* in the ſpace of more than 2000 years, " never " moved out of its place *one word* of what " was written by *Moſes*, rather willing to " die a thouſand times than go contrary to " the laws and cuſtoms;" and that there was a *Maſorah* before their times is acknowledged by ſome who have been oppoſers

† De vita Moſis, l. 3. p. 670, 673. [q] De Varia Heb. Lib. Script. & Lect. [r] Contr. Apion l. 1. c. 8. [s] Apud. Euſeb. Evangel. præpar. l. 8. c. 6. p. 357.

poſers of the points, as before obſerved. The ſilence of *Philo* and *Joſephus* about the points, is only a proof that they were not a matter of controverſy, but no proof of their not being in uſe.

## A. D. 31.

THAT the points were in uſe in the times of Chriſt may be concluded from *Mat.* v. 18. *till heaven and earth paſs away one jot* (or one *Yud*, as the *Syriac* verſion) *or one tittle* (or one *Chirek*, as *Elias Hutter* in his *Hebrew* verſion) *ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the law till all be fulfilled*; and ſo as the leaſt letter in the *Hebrew* alphabet *Yod* is referred to, the leaſt of the points in uſe, *Chirek*, is alſo; between which and the *Greek* word κεραια, uſed by the Evangeliſt, is great nearneſs of ſound, and ſeems to be no other than that point made *Greek*. So Dr. *Lightfoot* [6] obſerves that our Saviour in his words of one *Iota*, and one *Keraia*, not periſhing from the law, ſeems to allude to the leaſt of the letters, *Jod*, and to the leaſt vowel and accent. The argument from hence cannot well be put more ſtrongly

[6] Works, vol. 1. p. 1014.

ſtrongly than it is by Dr. *John Prideaux* [p], who yet was an oppoſer of the points; "if the points, ſays he, were not at this "time, why does the Saviour make men- "tion of them? if they were the ſame "with the conſonants or only cornicular "eminencies of them, why are they rec- "koned here as diſtinct things?" and to which he makes a very feeble anſwer, and indeed the argument ſeems unanſwerable: nor can the pricks on certain letters called תגין, be deſigned, though very ancient, being mentioned in the *Talmud* [a], and the ſame letters on which they are put, and on them only and not on all; and as *Broughton* [b] obſerves, "theſe, and likewiſe accents, are "no part of the word, therefore vowel- "pricks (or points) muſt be meant;" and it may be concluded with *Piſcator* on the place, that Chriſt "ſo calls, i. e. tittles, what now "go by the name of points, which in *He-* "*brew* writing are variouſly put to letters, "both to ſignify the proper ſound of ſome "of them, and the vowel-ſounds, and alſo "the accents and parts of a ſentence; hence "it appears that the holy Bible in the time

[p] Viginti duæ Lectiones, Lect. 12. p. 182. [a] T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 29, 2. [b] Works, p. 204.

" time of Chriſt was pointed, and that " that punctuation was approved of by " him ;" ſo *Paſor* in his *Lexicon* ſays, " by tittle here is meant a point; wherefore the vowel-points were in the time of *Chriſt*, and not, as ſome pretend, a new invention." The words of Chriſt expreſſed on the croſs, *Eli, Eli*, &c. and the names of perſons in the genealogies of the Evangeliſts, and in *Heb.* xi. and in other places of the New Teſtament, ſeem to confirm the modern punctuation. The *Dageſh forte* appears, and is preſerved in many words in thoſe times, as in *Immanuel*, *Mat.* i. 23. *Matthew*, *Lebbæus*, *Thaddæus*, *Matt.* x. 3. *Hoſanna*, *Matt.* xxi. 9. *Ephphatha*, *Mark* vii. 34. *Anna*, *Luke* ii. 36. *Matthat*, *Matthathias*, *Luke* iii. 24, 25. *Matthias*, *Acts* i. 23. *Abaddon*, *Rev.* ix. 11. *Armageddon*, *Rev.* xvi. 16. *Sabbaton*, *Matt.* xii. 5. *Lamma*, *Mark* xv. 34. with others, and the *Dageſh lene* in *Capernaum*, *Sarepta*, and others; and even the uſe of the *Pathach Genubah* appears in the pronunciation of *Meſſias* and *Siloam* as well as the other points, *John* i. 41. and ix. 7, 11.

A. 30. Ante Chriſtum.

About this time lived two famous doctors among the *Jews*, *Hillell* and *Shammai*, heads of two ſchools and of two ſects, ſo different, that it is ſaid [c] the law was as two laws, and a faſt was appointed on account of the diviſion between them [d]; the former was followed by the *Rabbanite Jews*, and the latter by the *Karaite Jews*: and it may be obſerved, that *Joſephus* [e] calls *Pollio*, the ſame with *Hillell*, a Phariſee, but not *Sammeas* or *Shammai*, he mentions with him; through whom the *Karaites* derive the genealogy and ſucceſſion of their doctors, and from whom they ſay they received the doctrine and copy of the law [f]; which *Shammai* had from *Shemaiah*, and he from *Judah ben Tabbai*, in whoſe days the ſeparation was made, 120 years before *Chriſt*, as will be ſeen hereafter. Now the *Karaites* with one conſent declare, that the copy of the law [g] they had, had the points and accents, and that ſuch copies

[c] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 88, 2. [d] Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. [e] Antiqu. l. 15. c. 1. ſ. 1. Dod Mordecai, ſive Comment. de Karæis, c. 9. p. 97. Edit. a Wolfio. [g] Ibid, c. 12. p. 150.

copies they always had and uſed; as the *Hillellian* copy is alſo a pointed one. I have obſerved under A. D. 340. that ſome learned men take that copy to be this *Hillell*'s, and I am pretty much inclined to the ſame opinion; for, as *Shammai* had a copy for him and his party, ſo *Hillell* had, no doubt, one for him and his; and as the *Karaites* boaſt of their copy, and of the antiquity of it, ſo the *Rabbanites* boaſt of *Hillell*'s copy; which muſt be the copy of ſome eminent perſon of that name, by which all copies were corrected; and who ſo eminent as this *Hillell?* It is indeed moſt generally aſcribed to a *Hillell*, who lived in the fourth century, not ſo famous as this; and as for the copy which R. *Zacuth* ſaw, and which had been written 900 years before he ſaw it, which, from 1500, in which he lived, carries it up to the year 600, it falls ſhort of that *Hillell*, and ſtill more of this. I ſuppoſe, therefore, that that was a copy taken from the original copy of the elder *Hillell*, and being the only one remaining, was valued, and made uſe of for correcting all other copies; ſo that if this was the caſe, there were two pointed Bibles as early as the

date given. *Hillell* began his government as the head of an academy, 100 years before the deſtruction of the temple, about the beginning of the reign of *Herod*[h], with which *Joſephus*[i] agrees, who calls him *Pollio*, as before obſerved.

A. 40. Ante Chriſtum.

About this time lived R. *Nechuniah Ben Kanah*, as the *Jewiſh* chronologers[q] generally place him. I ſuſpect him to be the ſame whom *Grotius*[r] calls R. *Nehumias*, who, according to him, was fifty years before Chriſt, and who then openly declared, that the time of the *Meſſiah* ſignified by *Daniel*, would not be prolonged beyond thoſe fifty years. To this *Rabbi* the book of *Bahir* is generally aſcribed by the *Jews*: Could the authenticity and antiquity of it be eſtabliſhed, it would furniſh out a very early proof of the points; for R. *Bechai*[s], a celebrated writer with the *Jews*, has a quotation out of it to this pur-

[h] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 15, 1. Juchaſin, fol. 19, 2. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 24, 2. [i] Antiqu. l. 15. c. 1. ſ. 1. & c. 10. ſ. 4. & Joſipp. Heb. l. 5. c 13. [q] Juchaſin, fol. 20, 1. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 24, 2. [r] De Ver. Relig. Chriſt. l. 5. ſ. 14. [s] Apud Buxtorf. Tiberiad. c. 9.

purpoſe, " Letters are like to the body, " and points to the ſoul, for the points " move the letters as the ſoul moves " the body, as our R. R. expound in " the book of *Bahir*;" but ſeeing ſuch antiquity of this book is doubtful as aſcribed to it, I lay no ſtreſs upon it; though *Buxtorf*[t] ſays, it is the moſt ancient of all the *Rabbinical* books, and if ſo, it muſt be as ancient as it is ſaid to be; ſince *Jonathan Ben Uzziel*, who wrote on the prophets, was cotemporary with the ſuppoſed author of it.

A. 120. Ante Chriſtum.

In the times of *John Hyrcanus*, and *Alexander Jannæus* his ſon, ſprung up the ſect of the *Karaites*[u] in oppoſition to the Phariſees, who had introduced traditions, and ſet up the oral law, which theſe men rejected. In the times of the ſaid princes lived *Simeon Ben Shetach*, and *Judah Ben Tabbai*, who flouriſhed A. M. 3621. theſe two ſeparated, the latter from the former, becauſe he could not embrace his inven-



[t] Bibliothec. Rab. p. 319. ſo Groddeck de Script. Rabbin. ſ. 74. p. 26. [u] Coſri, par. 3. ſ. 65. Maimon. in Pirke Abot, c. 1. ſ. 3. Juchaſin, fol. 51. 1.

tions which he formed out of his own brain; and from him the *Karaites* ſprung, who were firſt called the ſociety or congregation of *Judah Ben Tabbai* [k], which was afterwards changed into the name of *Karaites:* for that they had their riſe from *Anan* and *Saul,* who lived in the eighth century after Chriſt, and ſo after the *Talmud* was finiſhed, as ſay *Morinus* [l] and others, is very falſe; for mention is made of them in the *Miſnah* [m] compiled in the 2d century; they were only the reſtorers not the authors of *Karaiſm,* which muſt be near as early as *Phariſaiſm;* and that, according to *Joſephus* [n], was as early as the times of *Jonathan* the *Maccabee.* Now theſe men, the *Karaites,* adhered to the ſcriptures only, whence they had their name, which ſignifies *Scripturarians,* the ſame, as ſome think, with the *Scribes,* γραμματεις, *letter-men,* and theſe the ſame with the lawyers in the New Teſtament, who kept to the letter of the ſcriptures, *Matt.* xxiii. 13. compared with *Luke* ii. 52.

[k] Dod Mordecai, c. 2. p. 12, 13, 14. [l] De Sincer. Heb. Text. l. 2. Exercit. 7. c. 1 ſ. 6. [m] Megillah c. 2. fol. 24, 2. Amſtelod. Ed. vid. Houting. in Miſn. Roſhhaſhanah, c. 2. ſ. 1. & Trigland. de Sect. Karæorum, p. 20, 21. [n] Antiq. l. 13. c. 5. ſ. 9.

52. and *Matt.* xxii. 35. with *Mark* xii. 28. but the Scribes and Phariſees are not only put together, but as agreeing with each other, and ſo they might in ſome things agree againſt the Sadducees, who denied the reſurrection, See *Acts*, xxiii. 9. and might differ in other things; but what makes moſt againſt the Scribes being the ſame with the *Karaites*, is their joining with the Phariſees in the point of traditions, *Mat.* xv. 1. 2. *Mark* vii. 1—5. and on the other hand what ſeems moſt to favour the notion that the Scribes and Lawyers differed from the other ſects, is the text in *Luke* xi. 45. and certain it is, that Chriſt does ſpeak more favourably of the Scribes than of others, *Matt.* xiii. 52. and xvii. 10, 11. *Mark* xii. 28, 34. and he is ſometimes compared with them, though with ſome difference, *Matt.* vii. 29; and *Orobio*, a *Jew*, of the laſt century, ſaid [o] our *Jeſus* was a *Karaite*; and a *Rabbinical Jew*, out of ill-will to the *Karaites*, feigned a letter [p] from them to the other *Jews*, aſſerting that *Jeſus* of *Nazareth* agreed with them, and exhorted his followers to re-

 ceive

[o] Apud Trigland. ut ſupra, c. 6. p. 66. [p] Apud Huldric. Not. ad Toldos Jeſchu, p. 82, 83.

ceive their rites, and not thoſe of the *Rabbanites*; and that their anceſtors had no hand in his death, and that they were the *Rabbanites* that ſlew him, and were only anſwerable for it; but it is evident that the Scribes were concerned in the death of Chriſt, *Matt.* xvi. 21. and xx. 18. xxvi. 3. xxvii. 42. though after all, it may be reaſonably thought that the *Karaites*, ſome of them, were among the Scribes, of which ſcribes there were ſome in every ſect, and included in them [q]; for as there were Scribes on the ſide of the Phariſees, *Acts* xxiii. 9. ſo mention is made in *Jewiſh* writings, of the Scribes of the *Sadducees* [r], and of the *Samaritans*. Now the ſentiments of theſe men, the *Karaites*, were from the beginning of them, conſtant and uniform; they made the ſcripture their only rule, would not admit of any innovation in it, nor addition to it, nor that the inventions and traditions of men ſhould be made equal to it, and much leſs ſet up above it. The teſtimony therefore of ſuch men for the points, muſt be very conſiderable.

*Bux-*

[q] Vid. Druſium de Sect. Jud. l. 2. c. 13. Alting. Shilo, l. 4. c. 8. Trigland. ut ſupra, c. 6. [r] G. Urſin. Antiqu. Heb. Academ. c. 9. p. 227.

*Buxtorf*[w], the younger, indeed, does ſay of the *Karaites*, that they rejected punctuation as a ſpecies of the oral law, and of tradition; greatly miſtaking the author of the book of *Coſri*, who from the *Karaites* admitting the points, urges their admiſſion of tradition; ſince he, and other *Jews*, thought punctuation, from the times of *Moſes* to *Ezra*, was delivered by tradition, and therefore, ſays he [x], 'if ſo it is, both we and the *Karaites*, are bound to admit tradition;' to which king *Choſroes* is made to anſwer, 'ſo the *Karaites* indeed will ſay (i. e. with reſpect to the neceſſity of the tradition of the points and accents to read the book of the law); but when they have found or got a perfect law (a copy with points and accents) they will deny that they have any further uſe of tradition, i. e. for the explanation of it.' Now though this writer may go too far in aſcribing traditions to the *Karaites*, though they did allow it in ſome ſenſe; yet it is plain he took it for granted, that they were for uſing, and did make uſe of pointed copies of the law; and ſo *Morinus* * himſelf underſtood it, and owns it;

[w] De Punct. Antiqu. par. 1. p. 300. [x] Coſri, par. 3. ſ. 33, 34. * Epiſt. Buxtorf. ep. 70. in Antiqu. Eccleſ. Orient. p. 362.

it; but this is ſtill more clear and manifeſt from their own writings: in a book [y] of theirs, in great repute with them, it is obſerved, that the patrons of tradition explain *boughs of thick trees*, uſed in the feaſt of tabernacles, *Lev.* xxiii. 40. of a tree whoſe leaves are treble, according to *Exod.* xxviii. 14. but, ſays the *Karaite* writer, this is contrary to the nature of the language, for this ע (in עבת) is with a *Kametz*, but that is with a *Sheva*; ſo in another work [z] they ſay, the *Rabbanites* affirm, that what is written in the law needs explanation by tradition, but we don't believe ſo; but that what is written, its explanation goes *along with it*, meaning in the vowel-points; and a little after ſome pointed words are uſed. The *Karaites* own, that their copies of the Bible agree with thoſe of the *Rabbins*, becauſe the diſpoſition and order of the books of ſcripture were made by *Ezra*, who lived before the ſchiſm; and as to the various readings of *Ben Aſher* and *Ben Naphtali*, many of which are about the points and ac-

[y] Addareth Eliahu apud Trigland. de Sect. Kar. p. 32.
[z] R. Caleb, Aſarah Maamarot, MS. apud Trigland. Ib. p. 117.

accents, they rather agree with the latter; but it greatly displeases them that in some places the points are changed and others put in their room for modesty-sake[a], as in 1 *Sam.* v. 6. 9. 12. and vi. 4. 2 *Kings* vi. 25. by which it appears they are very tenacious of the points, and are not for altering them on any account; which they would never be sticklers for, could they be thought by them to be the invention of the *Rabbins*, and additions to the scriptures made by them. *Mordecai*, the famous *Karaite* in 1699, and his associates, are unanimous for the antiquity and coevity of the points with the letters; his words in answer to some questions sent him by *Triglandius* are these*, "all our wise men with one mouth affirm "and profess, that the whole law was "pointed and accented, as it came out of "the hands of *Moses* the man of God:" how false then is it what *Morinus* † says, that "all the *Jews*, the *Karaites* also, tho' "enemies of the traditions, and the *Kabala*, "believe, as a most certain tradition, that "the book of the law which *Moses* deli-

"vered

[a] Chillouk MS. apud Trigland. Ib. p. 189, 190.
* Dod Mordecai, c. 12. p. 150–157. † Epist. Buxtorfio in Antiqu. Eccles. Orient. Ep. 70. p. 394.

" vered to the *Iſraelites*, was without points " and acents;" but F. *Simon* * is againſt him, and affirms, that the *Karaites* readily receive the Bible with the vowel-points, accents, and *Maſorah*. The above *Karaite* goes on and ſays, " far be it that the in- " vention of points and accents was made " after the finiſhing of the *Talmud*, for " this is largely to be confuted; for the " diviſion of the *Rabbans* and *Karaites* " was long before the finiſhing of the " *Talmud*, as has been proved; and if " there were no points nor accents in " the time of the diviſion, but were found " out only after the finiſhing of the *Tal-* " *mud*, then there would be different co- " pies of the law and of the prophets in " our hands; that is, copies in the hands " of the *Karaites*, pointed different from " the pointing of the copies in the hand " of the *Rabbans*; for in the places where " the *Rabbans* have contradicted the vowels " and the accents, and ſay, don't *read ſo*, " *and ſo*, they would not have ſaid, *don't* " *read*, but abſolutely they would have " pointed according to their will and " and ſenſe;" of which he gives inſtances in

* Diſquiſit. Critic. c. 4. p. 25. & c. 12. p. 93, 95.

in which they might have ſo done; and obſerves, that many of the *Rabbans* aſſert, that the points and accents were equally as ancient as the letters; as R. *Azariah* in *Meor Enayim*, and R. *Samuel Arkevolti* in *Arugat Habboſhem:* and he goes on and ſays, that "the copy of the ſcriptures which we have is the ſame that "the *Rabbans* have; in this there is no diviſion, no difference between us; for "the diſpoſition or order of the ſcriptures "was from the men of the great ſynagogue, thoſe good figs, on whom be "peace, at which time there was no diſſenſion between them; wherefore with "us there is nothing full and deficient, "neither firſt and laſt, no *Keri* and *Chetib*, but what are in the order of the "ſcriptures which is now in the hands of "the *Rabbans*; and the moſt correct books "are the moſt in eſteem with us, and we "follow, or depend upon the reading of "*Ben Naphtali:*" and it is certain their Bibles had the ſame *Maſoretic* notes and obſervations in common with the *Rabbanites*; ſo it is obſerved by them *, that the

* Menachem in Dod Mordecai, c. 10 p. 130. that Menachem was a Karaite, vid. Trigland. de ſect. Karæorum, c. 11. p. 187.

the letter ה in twenty places is written at the end of a word, but not read, which agrees with the preſent *Maſorah*. R. *Aaron*, a *Karaite*, publiſhed a *Hebrew* grammar in 1581, in which he never deſerts, as can be obſerved, the modern punctuation of the Bible, and conſults the *Maſorah* in words written defectively, or in any other irregular way, and is full of *Maſoretic* obſervations, ſuch as the *Rabbanites* produce *; and a *Karaite* †, of the ſame name, who wrote a commentary on the law in 1294, frequently refers to the points, and makes mention of the names of them, as, *Tzere*, *Pathach*, *Sheva*, *Hataph-camets*, *Cholem*, *Shurek*, *Dageſh*. This ſect, the *Karaites*, would never have admitted the preſent punctuation, if they had not believed it obtained in the Bible of old, and came from God himſelf; and as others relate [c], they ſtrongly affirm, that the vowel-points of the *Hebrew* Bible are from *Moſes* and the prophets. The ſenſe of the *Karaites* about the points is with me an invincible

* Vid. Wolfii Acceſſ. ad Notitiam Karæorum, p. 37. & Biblioth. Heb. p. 119. † Vid. Simon. Diſqu. Critic. c. 12. p. 95, 96. vid. Maſſechet Sopherim, c. 6. f. 4. [c] Legeri Epiſt. Hottinger. in Theſaur. Philolog. p. 54.

ble proof of the great antiquity, and againſt the novelty of them; for from the time that this ſect roſe up, it was not poſſible for the *Phariſees*, *Rabbanites*, *Maſoretic*, or traditionary *Jews* call them by what names you will, to have introduced ſuch an invention as the vowel-points, in any period of time whatever, but theſe men would have objected to them as ſuch, and would never have received them; it is to me a demonſtration that the vowel-points were in being before the ſchiſm was, which was about the time before given, and were univerſally regarded by the *Jews* ſo early, as of a divine original.

A. 164. Ante Chriſtum.

The *Keries* and *Cetibs*, of which *Elias* ſays [d] there are 848, are various readings, or differences of the marginal reading from the written text. That theſe are of great antiquity is certain; ſince they are not only mentioned in the *Babylonian Talmud* [e], but in the *Jeruſalem Talmud* *, particularly the various reading of *Hagg.* i. 8. and in the

[d] Præfat. 3. ad Maſoret. [e] T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37, 2. Sopherim, c. 6. f. 5. 8. &. c. 7. f. 1, 2, 3, 4. & c. 9. f. 8. * Maccot, fol. 32, 1.

the book of *Zohar* [f]; though when these marginal readings were first made or began to be made, is not certain: the *Jews* say [g], they are a tradition of *Moses* from mount *Sinai*; but that cannot be, since his books were not then written, and much less the books of the prophets; some Christians indeed are of opinion, as *Broughton*, *Ainsworh*, and *Wasmuth*, that both the text and marginal reading are of divine inspiration; and it must be owned, that in many places they may be both taken into the sense of the passage, and much enrich it, and both are taken in by our translators in *Prov.* xix. 7. and in the margin of 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 13. and in other versions; but they are by others supposed to be put by *Ezra* and the men of the synagogue, on the return from the captivity, who, upon reviving the books of scripture, and several copies of it, observed various readings; so *Kimchi*, on 1 *Kings* xvii. 14. says, the copies were perplexed or disturbed in the captivity [h]; they found one copy so, and another so; and some they did not understand,

[f] In Deut. fol. 119, 3. & 226, 3. [g] T. Bab. Nedar. ut supra, Schulchan Aruch. par. c. 141. s. 8. [h] Vid. Ben Chayim Præfat. ad Bibl. Heb. col. 1.

ſtand, and ſome of which they did not chuſe to put into the text, nor to caſt away, and therefore put one within in the text, and the other without in the margin, to be uſed at diſcretion; and in his preface to the former prophets he obſerves much the ſame: "In the firſt captivity the copies "were loſt or removed out of their place, "(were out of order) and the wiſe men "that knew the law were dead; and the "men of the great ſynagogue, who re-"ſtored the law to its former ſtate, found "variations in the copies, and they went "after the greater number (of copies) ac-"cording to their judgment; and a place "which they could not clearly underſtand, "they wrote the word and did not point "it; or they wrote it without (in the "margin) and did not write it within (in "the text) and ſo they wrote in one way "within, and in another way without." It is ſaid in the *Jeruſalem Talmud* [a] "they "found three copies in the court, (not with "*Ezra*, as *Morinus* [b] renders it,) in one "they found it written מיעין, *Deut.* xxxiii. "27. in two מעונה; they confirmed the "two (as the true reading) and rejected



[a] Taanioth, fol. 68, 1. [b] Exercit. l. 2. exerc. 12. c. 3.

" the one; in one they found it written, " זעטוטי, *Exod.* xxiv. 5. in two נערי, they " confirmed the two, and rejected the " other; in one they found it written חשע, " *Gen.* xxxii. 22. in two אחת עשרה, they " confirmed the two and rejected the one." Some think [b] these three copies were what belonged to the three bodies of the *Jews* in *Judea*, *Babylon*, and *Egypt*; and conjecture, that from the collation of these copies arose the *Keri* and *Cetib*; though this refers to times after *Ezra* and the great synagogue. Translators sometimes follow the *Cetib*, and sometimes the *Keri*, as do the *Chaldee* paraphrases, which sometimes take in both, as in *Ps.* xxii. 16. which is a proof of the antiquity of them: there is a various reading in *Is.* xlv. 5. *Jonathan ben Uzziel*, and so *Aquila*, an ancient *Greek* interpreter, translate according to the margin; and *Symmachus* and *Theodotion*, two other ancient ones, translate according to the textual writing, which is observed by *Jerom* [i]; so that these various readings were known by him, though it has been denied,

[b] Lightfoot, Hor. Heb in Matt. 5. 18. p. 140. Othon. Lexic. Rabbin. p. 315. [i] Vid. Comment. in Is. c. 49. 5. in Hierem. c. 31, 40. fol. 160. Vide Loc. Heb. fol. 89. B.

nied, and were in being before the pretended *Maſoretes* of *Tiberias*. Nay, the forms and figures of letters unuſual, or of an unuſual poſition, marked by the *Maſoretes* are obſerved in the *Talmud* *; ſo that theſe *Maſoretic* remarks were before thoſe men were, ſaid to be after the finiſhing of that. Theſe readings ſeem to be deſigned not as corrections and emendations of the text, but only ſome as various readings, and others as euphemiſms, to be regarded by readers as may ſeem good to them, and others as obſerving anomalous punctuations; but in none was it intended that alterations ſhould be made in the text, but that that ſhould ſtand as it is, and was found: but it ſeems better with *Carpzovius* [k] to ſuppoſe that theſe marginal readings were made after the times of *Antiochus*, when the temple was purified and worſhip in it reſtored; and the autograph of *Ezra*, perhaps, and many copies of it being deſtroyed, though not all, (ſee *Maccab.* i. 59, 66. and iii. 49, and xii. 9.) it was thought proper to revile the



* T. Bab. Kidduſhin, fol. 30, 1. & 66. 2. Bava Bathra, fol. 109, 2. Sanhedrin, fol. 101, 2. Maſſech. Sopherim c. 9. f. 7. [k] Critic. Sacr. p. 342.

books of the ſcripture; and obſerving different readings in the copies they found, they placed them in the margin for the ſaid uſes; and therefore I have put the date of the original of them as above: now though theſe greatly reſpect words and letters, yet in ſome inſtances the change of conſonants appears to be in the margin for the ſake of vowels found in the text not ſo ſuitable to the conſonants in it; and therefore the vowels muſt be in the text when the *Keri* was put in the margin, as the learned *Pocock*[1] has obſerved in the *Keri* and *Cetib* of *Pſ.* xxx. 4. "for, ſays he, unleſs the *Maſoretes*, or whoever put the *Keri* in the margin had found מיורדי, ſo as it is now pointed, with vowels agreeing to the word מירדי, what need had they to ſubſtitute it? ſince the ſenſe as well, if not better, flows by reading it מיורדי; but if in other copies they had found it מידדי, and without vowel-points, why did they not daſh out the *Vau*, and read it ſo? and if they had found מיודדי, with its own vowels, in which they read it, they would never have dared to have caſt them away without neceſſity, and put thoſe in their

[1] Miſcellan. Not. in Port. Moſis, p. 64, 65.

their room, proper to an infinitive; as it is ſaid, the ſame commonly is the reaſon of others, in which *Vau* is poſtponed to *Kametz*, 1. *Sam.* xxvii. 11. *Joſh.* xv. 63. *Pſ.* ci. 5. and to *Pathach*, *Pſ.* v. 9." ſo that it appears to be the doctrine of the points, and the anomalous ones obſerved, that is ſometimes the cauſe of the marginal *Keri*, See *Iſ.* xxxvi. 12. where the points under the word in the text better agree with that in the margin, and ſeems to be the reaſon of the marginal reading. Some of thoſe *Keries* may not be ſo ancient as the date above; but additions may be made by ſome in later times; yet they ſeem chiefly to be of great antiquity, as appears by what has been obſerved of the *Targums* and ancient *Greek* copies; and *Buxtorf*[m] has given ſome rules to diſcern the one from the other.

A. 277. Ante Chriſtum.

In this year, according to biſhop *Uſher*[n], *Ptolemy Philadelphus* king of *Egypt*, being deſirous of erecting a library in *Alexandria*,



[m] Anticritica, par. 2. c. 4. p. 501. [n] Annal. Vet. Teſt. p. 480.

employed *Demetrius* his librarian to collect books for that purpose, who in a letter to the king preserved by *Eusebius* [o], tells him that he had diligently executed his orders; but that with some few other books, there remained the books of the law of the *Jews* to be got, which he says were contained in *Hebrew* letters and vowels; for what else can be meant by φωνη, as distinguished from letters? not the pronunciation and sound, which those volumes could not be said to lie in, but the vowel-points, by which the letters were read and pronounced, and are annexed to them for that purpose; so that it seems at this time the books of the Jews were written not only in *Hebrew* letters, but with *Hebrew* points, and in their own characters, as *Demetrius* says [p], which were different both from the *Egyptian* and *Syrian*, as he affirms; and which deserves to be remarked, as what may be of some service to shew what were the *Hebrew* characters then in use: and though it is commonly supposed that the seventy interpreters used an unpointed copy from which they translated, whence came

[o] Præpar. Evangel. l. 8. c. 3. p. 351. [p] Apud Euseb. p. 350. Vid. Aristeæ Hist. 70. p. 4, 5. Ed. Oxon. 1692.

came ſo many miſtakes to be made in their verſion; yet *Hottinger* [q] has obſerved near fifty places in which for *Kametz* they read *Tzere* or *Segol*; ſo *Leuſden** obſerves, that they read words with wrong vowels, as *Tzere* for *Kametz*, *Pſ.* xl. 5. *Patach* for *Tzere*, *Pſ.* vii. 12. *Chirek* for *Patach*, *Pſ* vii. 7. *Patach* for *Segol*, *Pſ.* xci. 3. and which might be owing either to a vitiated pointed copy before them, which led them wrong; or to an unpointed copy, and truſting to their memory, put one point for another; though Dr. *Lightfoot* [r] ſuggeſts they purpoſely "uſed an unpricked Bible, in which "the words written without vowels might "be bended divers ways, and into di-"vers ſenſes, and different from the mean-"ing of the original; and yet if the tranſ-"lation was queſtioned they might prick "or vowel the word ſo as to agree to "their tranſlation: how they have dealt "in this kind there is none that ever laid "the *Hebrew* Bible and the *Septuagint* to-"gether, but hath obſerved;" though he adds, "their differences from the ori-



[q] Theſaur. Philolog. l. 1. c. 3. p. 354, &c. * Philolog. Heb. Mixt. Differt. 4. p. 31. [r] Works, vol. 1. p. 490.

" ginal, which were innumerable, were " partly of ignorance, they themſelves not " being able to read the text always true, " in a copy unvowelled; but this ignorance " was alſo voluntary in them; they not " caring to miſtake, ſo that they might do " it with their own ſecurity;" and ſo Mr. *Broughton* [s] ſays, " that the ſeventy had " not the vowelled Bible, both for the rare- " neſs, and becauſe they never meant to " give the truth;" but be it that they uſed an unpointed Bible purpoſely, or a pointed one vitiated, it ſhews that points were in uſe in their time, and very neceſſary: and it may be obſerved, that the *Pentateuch*, which ſome, as *Joſephus* and others, think was the only part of ſcripture tranſlated by them, is almoſt every where tranſlated in agreement with the modern punctuation; and *Jerom* * long ago obſerved this, that the five books of *Moſes* tranſlated by them more agreed with the *Hebrew* than any other. It is an obſervation of *Capellus* † himſelf, that the ſeventy interpreters, who lived about 300 years

[s] Works, p. 60, 81. Gen. fol 65. D. Tom. 3. p. 183, 191, 192.

* Quæſt. ſeu Trad. Heb. in

† Orat. de Nom. Tetragram.

years before *Chriſt*, inſtead of the *tetragrammaton* or the word *Jehovah*, always read *Adonai*, and always render it by κυριος, a word not expreſſive of eſſence, as *Jehovah* is, but of lordſhip, as *Adonai* is; and that they are followed in this by the Apoſtles of Chriſt, and the reſt of the writers of the New Teſtament, and the ancient fathers of the church; and that from them the *Greek* interpreters of the Old Teſtament never depart, as *Aquila*, *Symmachus*, and *Theodotion*. Now what could lead them to read *Adonai*, and ſometimes *Elohim* inſtead of *Jehovah*, and tranſlate the word accordingly? not the conſonant letters of *Jehovah*, but the points of *Adonai* and *Elohim* put unto it as they now are; and *Capellus* * plainly confeſſes that this word had the points of *Adonai*, and ſometimes of *Elohim* in their time; for he ſays, the ſeventy when יהוה has the points of אלהים oftner render it κυριε κυριέ, as *Pſ.* lxviii. 21. & *paſſim*, and ſometimes κυριος, and θεος, as in *Amos* iii. 7. &c. from whence it is conjectured that for *Adonai Jehovah* they read *Adonai Elohim*.

A.

* Ib. p. 146.

A. 454. Ante Chriſtum.

In this year, according to biſhop *Uſher*[a], *Ezra* was returned from *Babylon*, and was at *Jeruſalem*, and read, and expounded the law to the people of the *Jews* there. It is the generally received notion of the *Jews*, that the vowel-points were annexed to the letters of the ſacred Books by *Ezra*; not but that they ſuppoſe they were originally from *Moſes* and the prophets, and that they are equally of divine authority as the letters; only they imagine they were delivered down from them by oral tradition to the times of *Ezra*, and by him affixed to the letters; and *Elias*, who invented the ſtory of the men of *Tiberias*, is of the ſame mind, only with this difference, that the oral tradition of the points was carried down to thoſe men, and they put them to the letters: as much like a fiction as this oral tradition looks, as it undoubtedly does, yet it is little leſs, if any, what *Capellus* and *Walton* allow, eſpecially the latter; that the pointing of the *Maſoretes* is not arbitrary, and at their pleaſure, but according to the ſound,

[a] Annal. Vet. Teſt. p. 197.

ſound, pronunciation, true and accuſtomed reading, always in uſe, handed down ſucceſſively to their times, and which contains the true ſenſe and meaning of the Holy Ghoſt. Dr. *John Prideaux* [u], an oppoſer of the antiquity of the points, yet thinks it probable that ſome of the points and accents for the diſtinction of the text, and, for the direction of the reading, were deviſed by *Ezra*, and by the ſucceeding *Maſoretes* before the *Talmudiſts*, and were preſerved in ſeparate parchments and ſheets, and that they were uſed and increaſed to the times of the *Tiberian Maſoretes*, who were after the *Talmudiſts*; which is giving up the invention of them by the men of *Tiberias*, and aſcribing the original of them to *Ezra*. Many who are clear for the divine authority of the points and accents are content they ſhould be aſcribed to *Ezra*, ſince he was divinely inſpired, as *Buxtorf* and others; and it may be ſafely concluded that the points and accents were in being in his time, ſince the *Maſorah* which was begun by him, or about his time [w], at leaſt by the men of his

[u] Viginti & duæ Lectiones, Lect. 12. p. 196, 197.
[w] Caſaubon. Epiſt. ep. 390. Porthæſio, p. 468.

his ſynagogue, is concerned about the points and accents, as well as other things, as has been obſerved; and beſides, the Scribes, which were aſſiſtant to *Ezra* in reading the law, cannot well be thought to read, at leaſt ſo well, to read it *diſtinctly*, and cauſe the people to underſtand *the reading* of it, even men, women, and children, without the points. Not to take any further notice of the ſenſe the *Talmudiſts*, both *Jeruſalem* and *Babylonian*, give of the text in *Neh.* viii. 8. I now refer to, which has been quoted already. Dr. *Humphrey Prideaux*, though he took that ſide of the queſtion, which denies that the vowel-points were affixed by *Ezra*, and of the ſame divine authority with the reſt of the text, yet allows, that they came into uſe a little after the time of *Ezra*, being then neceſſary for the reading and teaching of the *Hebrew* text *; which is not only an acknowledgement of the great uſefulneſs of the points, but carries the antiquity of them very high; and I ſee not if they were needful for the reading and teaching of the *Hebrew* text *a little* after the time of *Ezra*, why they were not as neceſſary in the time

* Connection, par. 1. b. 5. p. 352, 353.

time of *Ezra*; for was the neceſſity of them owing to the *Hebrew* language, then ceaſing to be vulgarly ſpoken, ſo, according to him, it did ceaſe to be in the times of *Ezra*; though I apprehend that is a miſtake, for it was ſome hundreds of years after, ere it ceaſed to be vulgarly ſpoken.

THERE is nothing to be obſerved between the times of *Ezra* and *Moſes* relative to the points; for I lay no ſtreſs on the different pronunciation of *Shibboleth*, in *Jud.* xii. 6. though *Schindler* [x] is of opinion that from hence it appears, that the point on the right and left hand of ש, was then in uſe, and ſo by conſequence the other points alſo.

*Elias Levita* [x] roundly aſſerts, that the copy of the law which was given by *Moſes* to the children of *Iſrael* was without points and accents; but this is ſaid without proof, and is what no man is able to prove. He quotes *Aben Ezra* [y], who ſays, the points were delivered at *Sinai*, but the tables of the law were not pointed, which ſeems to be a flat contradiction, at leaſt it is what is very improbable. Much better does

[x] Lex. Pentaglott. col. 1792. vid. Balmeſii. Gram. Heb. p. 14. lin. 9. 14. 16. [x] Præfat. 3. ad Maſoret. [y] Zach Shephataim in Ib.

does another writer [*] argue, whom he mentions, who in anſwer to the queſtion, How do we know that the points and accents are of God? ſays, "it may be replied, what is written in *Deut.* xxvii. 8. *and thou ſhalt write upon the ſtones all the words of this law very plainly*; but without the points and accents, which explain the words, no man, he ſays, can underſtand them *clearly* and *plainly*:" and whatever may be ſaid for the king's writing out a copy of the law, and reading in it all the days of his life *Deut.* xvii. 18, 19. and for the prieſts reading it once a year in the hearing of all *Iſrael*, which yet is not very eaſy to account for, without the points, ſo as to be underſtood, *Deut.* xxxi. 11. yet how the common people ſhould be able to read it to their children, and teach them the knowledge of it without the points, is ſtill more difficult of belief.

THE common opinion of the *Jews* is, either that the points and accents were delivered to *Moſes* on mount *Sinai*, yet only as to the power of pronouncing and reading, but not as to their marks and figures

[*] R. Levi bar Joſeph Semadar, in ib.

gures in writing; but that the true manner of reading the ſcriptures was propagated and preſerved by oral tradition to the times of *Ezra*; or that they were given to *Moſes* at *Sinai*, but were omitted in writing for the moſt part afterward, and ſo were forgotten, 'till *Ezra* came and reſtored them. But it rather ſeems that they were as early as the *Hebrew* letters; and ſince it is not improbable that theſe were before the flood, and before the confuſion of tongues, the points were alſo; and could the ſenſe of *Gen.* xi. 1. given by a late writer [a], be eſtabliſhed, it would be out of all doubt; which is this, *and the whole earth was of one language*, i. e. the *Hebrew* language, as afterwards called, *and of one ſpeech*, or *words*, that is, according to this writer, words diſtinguiſhed by acute or ſharp points; deriving the word uſed from חדד to *ſharpen*, whereby he thinks, the tautology in the text is avoided; and to which may be added, that the latter clauſe of the text is plural: yet I fear the word will not bear this ſenſe, ſince the ſingular and plural words uſed, the one in one clauſe, and the other in the other, muſt have

[a] Kalſ. de Ling. Heb. Natal. p. 33, 37, 38, 39.

have a different derivation, which is not uſual of a word in the ſame text.

If the book of *Jetzirah* was compiled by *Abraham*, to whom the *Jews* [b] commonly aſcribe it, though ſometimes to *Adam*, the points might be traced to his time; for in that book frequent mention is made of the double letters *Begad Cephat*, or *Begad Cephrat*, as there ſo called [c], becauſe they have a double pronunciation, which pronunciation depends upon the points, their having or not having in them the *Dageſh lene*. But though there is no reaſon to believe that the book was written either by *Abraham* or *Adam*, yet it is an ancient one, and by this inſtance it carries the antiquity of the points higher than is now commonly allowed unto them; for the book is ſpoken of in the *Talmud* [d]; and if it was written by R. *Akiba*, who is the only one mentioned by the *Jews* as the author of it, beſides *Adam* and *Abraham*, he died in the beginning of the ſecond century; though if *Jonathan Ben Uzziel* wrote a ſupplement to it, which was as a com-

[b] Coſri, par 4. c. 27. Juchaſin, fol. 52, 2. [c] C. 1. f. 2, 9, 10, & c. 2. f. 1. & c. 4. f. 1, 2, 3. [d] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 65, 2.

commentary on it, as is ſaid [e], it muſt be before his time, ſince *Jonathan* was cotemporary with Chriſt, or a little after him; and it may be obſerved, that the double pronunciation of the above letters was in uſe in the times of Chriſt, as appears from the words, *Armageddon*, *Capernaum*, *Euphrates*, *Joppa*, *Paſcha*, *Sarepta*, and others.

It is not only the opinion of ſome *Jewiſh* writers, that the vowel-points, as well as letters, were given by God himſelf to *Adam*, as the author of *Coſri* [f], and his commentator *Muſcatus* [g], and of R. *Azariah* [h], and of others; but ſome Chriſtian writers [i] alſo, aſcribe them to *Adam*; and indeed, if the *Hebrew* letters were of his invention, as many have thought, and *Walton* [k] himſelf thinks, there can be no reaſonable doubt but the vowels were alſo; but be this as it may, I am inclined to believe that the vowels were coeval with the letters, and that the penmen of the ſacred ſcriptures, ſeverally annexed, the vowel-



[e] Vid. Wolfii Bibliothec. Heb. p. 28. [f] Par. 4. c. 25. [g] In Ib. fol. 229, 1. [h] Meor Enayim, c. 59. [i] Alſted. Chronolog. p. 267. vid. Buxtorf. de Punct. Antiqu. par. 2. p. 309, 310. [k] Prolegom. 2. ſ. 7.

points to letters in their writings. My reaſons are theſe:

1. THE perfection of language requires vowels. No language can be perfect without them; they are the life and ſoul of language; letters without them are indeed dead letters; the conſonants are ſtubborn and immoveable things, they can't be moved or pronounced without vowels, which are, as *Plato* ſays [l], the bond of letters, by which they are joined, and without which they can't be coupled together: can it be thought, therefore, that the *Hebrew* language, the firſt, and moſt perfect of all languages, ſhould be without them, which, if this was the caſe, would be the moſt imperfect of all the *oriental* languages? for notwithſtanding what has been ſaid to the contrary, the *Samaritan* had its points, though differing from the *Hebrew*, as *Jerom* obſerves [m], and ſo a later writer [n] has obſerved it has. The *Syrians*, *Chaldæans*, *Arabs*, and *Perſians*, had vowel-points likewiſe, as *Hottinger* affirms [o], and ſo dean *Prideaux* [p]. The invention of the *Syriac*

[l] Sophiſta p. 177. [m] Præfat ad Reg. T. 3. fol. 5. L. [n] Petrus a Valle in Antiqu. Eccl. Orient. p. 184. [o] Theſaur. Philolog. p. 403. [p] Connection, par. 1. B. 5. p. 55.

*Syriac* vowel-points is indeed by ſome [s] aſcribed to *Ephrem Syrus*, who lived in the 4th century; and as for the *Ethiopic* language, the vowels are incorporated into the conſonants, and are a part of them, and ſo muſt be *ab origine*, and coeval with them; and even thoſe who are for caſting away the vowel-points ſeem to be ſenſible of a neceſſity of ſubſtituting ſomething in their room, the *matres lectionis*, as they call them, אוי to which ſome add ה; but theſe are not ſufficient, being wanting in a great number of words; witneſs alſo the various methods of reading *Hebrew*, contrived by men; but why ſhould they be at pains to find out a method of reading and pronouncing the *Hebrew* language, when there is ſuch a plain one at hand, ready prepared for them, and of which *Walton* himſelf ſays [t], that it is a moſt profitable and uſeful invention no man can deny?

2. The nature and genius of the *Hebrew* language require points; without theſe the difference can't be diſcerned between nouns and verbs, in ſome inſtances, as דבר, with many others; between verbs active,



[s] Vid. Fabritii Bibliothec. Gr. Tom. 5. p. 320. [t] Prolegom. 8. ſ. 10.

and verbs paſſive, between ſome conjugations, moods, tenſes, and perſons, *Kal*, *Piel*, *Pual*; imperatives and infinitives, are proofs hereof; nor can the *Vau* converſive of tenſes be obſerved [r], which yet is uſed frequently throughout the Bible, and without which, the formation of ſome of the tenſes by letters would be uſeleſs. *Morinus* [s] himſelf ſays, "that without the "points a grammar cannot be written, as "*Elias* rightly obſerves; for example, de- "ſcribe the conjugation *Kal* without "points, and immediately you'll be at a "ſtand, and much more in *Piel*;" and *Walton* [t] alſo owns the uſe of them in the inveſtigation of the roots. The pronunciation of ſome letters depends upon the points as has been obſerved.

3. The vowel-points are neceſſary and uſeful to the more eaſy learning, reading, and pronouncing the *Hebrew* language. What men well ſkilled in the language may be able to do is one thing, and what learners of it, and beginners in it can do is another thing; men well verſed in it may

[r] Vid. Coſri, par. 2. c. 80. [s] Epiſt. Buxtorfio in Antiqu. Eccl. Oriental. p. 392. [t] Introduct. Orient. Ling. p. 5.

may chuſe to read without them; and ſo a man that is maſter of *Brachygraphy* may chuſe to read what he has written in ſhort hand, and to which he is uſed, rather than in long hand; but this is no proof of the perfection and propriety of his *Brachygraphy*. "A tongue, as Dr. *Lightfoot* ſays[u], "cannot firſt be learnt without vowels, "though at laſt ſkill and practice may "make it to be read without; grammar "and not nature makes men to do this:" and a late learned writer has obſerved[w], that "to talk of reading *Hebrew* without points, "is a *colluſive* way of ſpeaking; we may "do it when we have learnt the language, "but not before; as it is a dead language "we want inſtructions either by word of "mouth or by grammar. Points in *He-*"*brew* are like ſcaffolds in building, when "the work is finiſhed we may take them "down and throw them aſide, but not "ſooner with ſafety." Dr. *John Prideaux*[x] an oppoſer of the antiquity of the points, owns that "the tongue being toſſed "about by various calamities, the points



[u] Works, vol. 1. p. 1014. [w] Chappelow's Preface to his Comment on Job, p. 18, 19. [x] Viginti & duæ Lectiones, Lect. 12. p. 189.

" were added, that it might be the more " accurately preſerved, and that by the " *Jews*, to whom it ceaſed to be verna- " cular; as alſo that by others it might the " more *eaſily* be underſtood, and be more " *exactly* pronounced :" and elſewhere he ſays [y], let them be whoſe additions to the text they may, they are ſo far from corrupting it, that they rather protect it from corruption, and lead to a more *eaſy* reading and underſtanding of it; and ſo *Walton* [z], another oppoſer of the points, ſays, " the " Chriſtian church received their (the *Ma-* " *ſoretes*) punctuation, not upon their au- " thority, but becauſe it expreſſed the *true* " *ſenſe* received *in the church of God*; and " withal becauſe they ſaw it conduced " much to the *more eaſy* reading of the " text, and even to the true reading of it, " as he owns * :" and their great maſter and chief leader *Capellus* [a], having treated of the points and accents deviſed and added to the ſacred *Hebrew* text by the *Maſoretes*, as he ſuppoſed, frankly owns, " that up- " on that account we now certainly owe " much

[y] Faſciculus Controverſ. de Script. qu. 3. p. 21. [z] The Conſiderator conſidered, p. 209. * Prolegom. 8. ſ. 17. [a] Arcan. Punct. l. 1. c. 17. ſ. 11.

" much unto them; or rather, ſhould *give*
" *thanks* to God, who ſtirred up theſe men
" to it, and put them upon the ſtudy of
" it; for in that work they have certainly
" laboured moſt ſucceſsfully, ſo that now
" by the help of thoſe *little marks* we can
" *far more eaſily*, and even more happily
" be converſant in reading and underſtand-
" ing the ſacred *Hebrew* text, than other-
" wiſe could have been done by us with-
" out this help." Why then ſhould it not be attended to? and indeed I cannot ſee how common people, men, women, and children, could be able to read it without points, when it was their mother tongue; it was their duty and intereſt to read their Bible in it, for whoſe ſake it was written, and who had as great an intereſt and concern in it as men the moſt learned have, it being the grand charter of their ſalvation; the Bible was not written for learned men only, but for theſe alſo, and therefore it was written, as it was proper it ſhould be, in the moſt plain and eaſy manner.

4. THE vowel-points and accents are uſeful and neceſſary, to remove ambiguity and confuſion in words and ſentences, and

that the true ſenſe of them may be come at with eaſe, by perſons of the loweſt capacity and meaneſt ability, for whoſe ſake, as obſerved, the Bible was written; and that they are of this uſe has been owned by the oppoſers of them: ſo *Capellus*[b], ſpeaking of the accents ſays, "certainly "theſe little marks when fitly and oppor- "tunely put, are indeed of this uſe, that "ſometimes we leſs heſitate about, and "more expeditiouſly take in the mind and "ſenſe of the writer;" and ſo *Walton*[c] ſays of the *Maſoretes*, that "they pointed "the text, not at their own will and plea- "ſure, but according to the true ſenſe and "received reading from the ſacred writers "to their times; hence the reading is "made *more eaſy*, and the text leſs ob- "noxious to *ambiguity* and corruption." Should it be ſaid, as it often is, that by attending to the connexion of words, and to the context, the ſenſe of a word in queſtion may be ſoon and eaſily underſtood. Let it be obſerved, that all have not the ſame natural parts and abilities, and the like acumen of wit, clearneſs of underſtanding, and critical judgment, as particularly the above

[b] Arcan. Punct. l. 2. c. 25. ſ. 7. [c] Prolegom 8. ſ. 10.

above perſons mentioned; and beſides, the words in connexion and in the context being unpointed, ſome of them may be equally difficult to be underſtood, and the ſenſe of them muſt be examined and fixed, ere the ſenſe of the word in queſtion can be determined; all which will require time, and perhaps after all, entire ſatisfaction is not obtained: and if men who may be thought to be well verſed in the language, and men of parts and abilities, have been led into miſtakes, through a neglect or want of the points, much more may perſons of mean and ordinary capacities. The authors of the ſeveral *Greek* verſions of the Bible, the Septuagint interpreters, *Aquila*, *Theodotion*, and *Symmachus*, were all *Jews*, excepting the laſt, and he was a *Samaritan*, and may be allowed to have a conſiderable ſhare of knowledge of the *Hebrew* language; yet theſe, eſpecially the ſeventy interpreters, neglecting the points, and tranſlating without them, what groſs ſenſes have they put upon the text? ſometimes directly contrary to what is intended, ſometimes what is very abſurd, and even wicked and blaſphemous, or nearly ſo; take an inſtance of each, *God is angry*

*every*

*every day*, *Pſ.* vii. 11. the *Greek* verſion is, *does not bring on anger*, or *is not angry every day*, the word אל differently pointed, is uſed for *God*, and for the negative *not*. The paſſage in *Iſ.* xxiv. 23. *then the moon ſhall be confounded*, and the *ſun aſhamed*, *when the lord of hoſts ſhall reign*, &c. which with others Dr. *Lowth*[d] repreſents as ſo grand and magnificent, and ſo coloured, that no tranſlation can expreſs, nor any altogether obſcure; and yet this is moſt miſerably obſcured in the *Greek* verſion of it, and a ſenſe given extremely low, mean, and abſurd; *the brick ſhall waſte*, *and the wall ſhall fall*, *when the Lord reigns*, &c. לבנה differently pointed ſignifies the moon, and a brick, and חמה, the ſun and a wall, the authors of this verſion have abſurdly taken the latter ſenſe. *Lam.* iii. 33. it is, *he*, i. e. God, *doth not willingly afflict*; the *Greek* verſion is *he doth not anſwer from his heart*, cordially and ſincerely, thereby charging God with inſincerity and diſſimulation; yet the three letters ענה unpointed ſignify to *anſwer* as well as to *afflict*; in *Kal* it ſignifies the former, in *Piel* the latter; which is the true ſenſe here, and to be diſtinguiſhed by

[d] De Sacr. Poeſ. Heb. Prælect. 6. p. 69, 70.

by the points; and how have the ſame interpreters, by changing points and letters, ſpoiled the famous prophecy of the *Meſſiah* in *Iſ.* ix. 6. where, inſtead of *everlaſting Father, the Prince of peace,* they tranſlate I *will bring upon the princes peace?* though the paſſage is otherwiſe produced by *Clemens* of *Alexandria*[e], more agreeable to the *Hebrew* text; which ſhews that the *Septuagint* verſion is not in the ſame ſtate now it formerly was. The learned *Vitringa* * has obſerved, that "the *Greek* interpreter of *Alexandria*, who came forth under the name "and number of the *Seventy*, not being "expert in the *Jeruſalem reading*, has "often in his unhappy and unlearned verſion, ſo deformed the prophet (*Iſaiah*'s) "diſcourſe, in the more obſcure places, "that *Iſaiah* cannot be known again in "*Iſaiah*:" and through negligence or diſuſe of, or want of the points, the *Greek* interpreters have made miſtakes, when one would think it was almoſt impoſſible they ſhould; thus בנין differently pointed, or without any points, may ſignify *ſons* or *builders.*

[e] Pædagog. l. 1. c. 5. See alſo Euſeb. Demonſtrat. Evangel. l. 7. c. 1. p. 336, 337. * Præfat. ad Comment. in *Iſaiam*, Vol. I. p. 5.

*builders*. They have taken the word in the firſt ſenſe in 1 *King* v. 18. and contrary to the context and plain ſenſe of the words, read, *Solomon's ſons and Hiram's ſons hewed them*, the ſtones. The ſame word, conſiſting of the ſame letters, as differently pointed, has two or three ſenſes, and ſometimes half a dozen, and even eight or ten, as the word דבר. How difficult therefore muſt it be to attain unto, and ſettle the true ſenſe, as in ſuch and ſuch a place, at leaſt to common perſons; and for theſe the bible was originally written, as well as for learned men.

5. It will be difficult to aſſert and maintain the perſpicuity of the ſcripture, laying aſide the vowel-points and accents; and make it to comport with the wiſdom of God to deliver out his laws, the rule of man's conduct both towards himſelf and one another, and doctrines deſigned to make men wiſe unto ſalvation, and to inſtruct them in matters of the greateſt moment for time and eternity: to deliver theſe, I ſay, in ambiguous words, that admit of various ſenſes, and at beſt give a ſenſe difficult to attain unto by men of the deepeſt learning and of the greateſt capacity. It is

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the part of a wiſe law-giver to expreſs his laws, and of a king to publiſh his edicts, and of a teacher to give forth his doctrines and inſtructions in the cleareſt manner, in the plaineſt terms, in words the moſt eaſy to be underſtood; and not in ambiguous language capable of admitting divers ſenſes, and ſuch as is contrary to what is intended; and can it be thought that God, our law-giver and king, and who by his word propoſes to teach men to profit, and to lead them by the way they ſhould go, would act otherwiſe?

6. Nor ſhall we be able, I fear, to ſupport the infallibility of the ſcripture, that part of it the Old Teſtament, as a ſure rule of faith and practice, when by taking away or laying aſide the points, it becomes flexible, and may be turned as a noſe of wax to any thing to ſerve a purpoſe, to countenance any doctrine or practice agreeable to the different taſtes and inclinations of men; ſince hereby it will admit of different ſenſes, and ſo in conſequence muſt be uncertain, and not to be depended on: and, I fear it is this wantonneſs of ſpirit that has led many to throw away the points and accents, that they might be under no reſtraint,

ſtraint, but at full liberty to interpret ſcriptures as their fancy inclines, and their intereſt leads; but if the points give the true ſenſe and mind of the Holy Spirit in the ſacred writings, which has been owned by ſuch who have oppoſed the divine original of them, why ſhould they be laid aſide, to make way for any ſenſe the fancy of men may impoſe upon them? *Walton* in ſo many words affirms[f], that "they (the *Maſoretes*) "expreſs in their punctuation the *true ſenſe* "of the Holy Ghoſt, which was dictated "to the holy penmen, and by them com-"mitted to writing, and preſerved both by "Jews and Chriſtians"; and that "they "pointed the text according to the *true* "and *received reading*, which expreſſed the "*true ſenſe* of the Holy Ghoſt, and not as "they pleaſed; nor is it lawful for any "one to reject their reading at pleaſure, "but all are tied to it, unleſs ſome error "or better reading can be clearly proved;[g]" and *Capellus* himſelf ſays[h], "none are to "be obliged to admit the punctuation of "the *Maſoretes*, becauſe, and as it is from "them; but all may be bound by this "punctu-

[f] Prolegom. Polyglott. 3. ſ. 51. [g] The Conſiderator conſidered, p. 200. [h] Arcan. Punct. l. 2. c. 26. ſ. 2.

" punctuation, as and becauſe it can be " demonſtrated, that it almoſt every where " both agrees with the conſonants to which " it is added, with the ſeries and ſtructure " of the words in the paſſage, and that it " produces a ſenſe commodious, true, co- " herent, *&c.* nor can any other punctua- " tion be produced more apt and more " commodious[1]."

7. THE inſpiration of ſcripture is affected thereby. If *all ſcripture* or the *whole writing* of the Bible is *by inſpiration* of God, then not the matter only, but the words in which it is written, are of divine inſpiration; and indeed what elſe are meant by *the words the Holy Ghoſt teacheth*, 1 *Cor.* ii. 13? and if the words of ſcripture are of divine inſpiration, and given by God himſelf, then, ſurely, not half words, as conſonants without vowels are; and if whole words, which is moſt agreeable to the wiſdom and honour of the Divine Being, then both conſonants and vowels were given by inſpiration; and if the latter were not, but of human invention, then, ſo far as they have been and are in uſe, and the ſenſe of ſcripture

[1] Qui puncta vel negligunt, vel prorſum rejiciunt, certe carent omni judicio & ratione. Calvin. in Zech. xi. 7.

ture has been and ſtill is taken from them, and made to depend on them, ſuch ſenſe ſtands not upon divine authority, but upon human authority; and on that of a ſett of men, blinded, beſotted, and deſtitute of the Spirit of God, bitter enemies to chriſtianity, and perhaps a ſett of men as bad as ever was on earth; and if the points are of their invention and addition, they ought never to ſtand in our Bibles, and be uſed by us, but ſhould be rejected with great indignation: a pointed Bible, if poſſible, ſhould not be in the world, having in it ſuch an addition to the word of God, which ought not to be made, and which is ſo directly contrary to his order, *Deut.* iv. 2. and xii. 32. *Prov.* xxxi. 6. And to which may be further obſerved,

8. If the vowel-points were not annexed to the letters by the penmen of the ſacred writings, when penned by them, but have had a later and a new beginning, that would have been known; ſome would have divulged it; it would have been on record ſomewhere or another, and we ſhould have been informed by ſome means or another, by whom they were placed, and where and at what time; but nothing of this has ever tran-

tranſpired. The ſtory of *Elias* about the men of *Tiberias* merits no regard; and even that the points were annexed by *Ezra*, or by the men of his congregation, is mere conjecture, without any foundation; and therefore upon the whole it may be concluded, that they were originally put by the ſacred penmen, *Moſes* and the prophets.

It is often ſaid, in favour of reading the Bible without points, that *Rabbinical* books are written without them, and are eaſily read. But then it ſhould be obſerved, that they are read by ſuch who have firſt read the *Hebrew* Bible with points, and who are well verſed in *Bible-Hebrew*; and by ſuch the commentaries of *Kimchi*, *Abarbinel*, and others, may be read with ſome eaſe, whoſe ſtyle is plain and clear; and by degrees other writings more rough, crabbed and difficult may be read alſo; but as *Buxtorf*[1] and others obſerve, there is a great difference between the Bible and *Rabbinical* books, in writing, in ſtyle, in manner and means of learning and reading them. In *Rabbinical* books, the *matres lectionis*, as אהוי are called, are uſed to ſupply the want of vowels; whereas in the Bible they

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[1] De Punct. Antiq. par. 3 p. 370.

are moſt frequently omitted, and even in places where they might be expected, and leaſt of all ſhould be omitted: the ſtyle of *Rabbinical* books is for the moſt part plain, and where it is not, as in the *Talmud* and other writings, it is hard and difficult to read them; but the ſtyle of the Bible is generally ſhort, conciſe, full of ellipſes and other figures, eſpecially in the prophetic writings; add to which, what is contained in *Rabbinical* writings are things uſually before known, or eaſily underſtood, and to be read without much ſtop or hindrance; but the ſacred ſcriptures contain myſteries, things ſublime, and more remote from the capacities of men, and require more attention, help and aſſiſtance in reading them; and beſides, if a miſtake is made in *Rabbinical* writings, it is not of that importance, as in reading the Bible; and therefore we may venture to read with leſs pain and with more ſafety, the one without points than the other. *Buxtorf*, the ſon, upon his own obſervation aſſerts [k], that it is more eaſy to read *Rabbinical* books unpointed, than any of the books of the Bible pointed; and that he could venture to ſay, that

[k] De Punct. Antiq. par. 2. p. 376.

that he could more readily and certainly read any *Rabbinical* books never ſeen by him before, than any book of the Bible even pointed, and though well known by him, and often read over and over again. Yet, notwithſtanding all the advantages on the ſide of *Rabbinical* writings, how many miſtakes have been made by learned men, as by *Scaliger*, *Schickard*, *Kircher*, *Vorſtius*, and others? what blunders in tranſlation has *Buxtorf* expoſed in *Morinus* and *Capellus?* and even thoſe great maſters in *Rabbinical* literature, as the *Buxtorfs* themſelves, *Selden*, *Lightfoot*, &c. are not without their errors; nor need it be wondered at, ſince, in the *Talmuds* eſpecially, there are many places which ſeem quite unintelligible, and beſides are written in the *Chaldee* dialect, and that very impure, and abounding with exotic words.

It is frequently objected againſt the Bible being written and read with points, that the copy of the law every where kept in the Jewiſh ſynagogues is without points, as anſwering to the *Moſaic* Archetype. That it is an unpointed copy of the law which is uſually kept in the *Jewiſh* ſynagogues now,

will be allowed [l], but that the Archetype or Autograph of *Moſes* was without points may be aſſerted, but not eaſily proved; nor can it be ſaid, with any preciſion, how long it has been the cuſtom of the *Jews* to have an unpointed copy of the law in their ſynagogues; nor can what they have, be thought to be an ectype of, or to anſwer to the copy of *Moſes*, nor be kept with that view. For had the Autograph of *Moſes* the *Keri*, or marginal readings? it will not be ſaid by the oppoſers of the points that it had; but the preſent copies of the law in the ſynagogues of the *Jews* have, if I miſtake not, and even the pricks and points which they call *crowns* [m]; are the preſent copies in the ſynagogues written in *Samaritan* characters? they are not: and yet, according to the hypotheſis of *Morinus*, *Capellus*, and thoſe that follow them, they ought to be ſo written, to be an ectype of, or to anſwer to that of *Moſes*; ſince that, according to them, was in that character: but to have a copy in that character now would be contrary to their own rules, one of which runs thus [n], "they

[l] Lyra in Hoſ. ix. 12. Menaſſeh ben Iſrael. Conciliator, in Exod. qu. 50. p. 170. [m] Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 141. f. 8. and par. 2. c. 275. f. 6. Vid. Hackſpan. Cabala, p. 309. [n] Maſſechet Sopherim, c. 1. f. 6.

" they dont write (the ſacred books) nei-
" ther in the language beyond the river
" (or the *Samaritan*), nor in the *Syriac*,
" nor in the *Median*, nor in *Greek*; and in
" whatſoever language or writing they are
" written, they may not be read (*i. e.* pub-
" lickly) until they are written in the *Aſ-*
" *ſyrian*," or ſquare character. There are other reaſons to be given, why unpointed copies are kept and uſed in the ſynagogues of the *Jews*, and which may ſerve to lead to the original of this cuſtom, and the reaſon of its continuance.

1. ONE reaſon was, that the *Cabaliſts*, and thoſe who had got into the allegorizing way of interpreting the ſcriptures, might have the opportunity of framing and eſtabliſhing their own and even various ſenſes of them, which an unpointed Bible will admit of, when a pointed one will not. Hence that ſaying of R. *Menachem* [o], " a
" book of the law in which there are many
" faces (or on which many ſenſes may be
" put) is one not pointed;" for, as he ſays,
" when letters are not pointed, they have
" many faces (or may be differently read);
" but when they are pointed, they have only
" one

[o] Apud Munſter. Præfat. ad Vet. Teſt.

" one ſenſe, according to the punctuation:" and this R. *Bechai*[p] plainly ſuggeſts, is the original cauſe and reaſon of uſing unpointed copies; " letters not pointed, he ſays, admit " of various ſenſes, and are divided into " divers ſparks; and *becauſe of this we are* " *commanded* not to point the book of the " law; for the literal ſenſe of every word " is according to the punctuation, and " there is but one literal ſenſe in a pointed " word; but an unpointed word a man " may underſtand many ways, and find out " many wonderful and excellent things:" and it is for much the ſame reaſon, that men may not be tied down to one ſenſe of a word, that points are now ſo much oppoſed. Some have drawn an argument for the novelty and againſt the antiquity of the points, from the *Cabaliſts* making no uſe nor mention of them in their writings, but drew their various ſenſes, it is ſaid, from the letters only, and the combination of them, and not from the vowels and accents; but this has been abundantly confuted by *Buxtorf*[q]. The commentator on the book of *Coſri*[r] makes mention of R. *Aaron*, a great

[p] Apud Buxtorf. ut ſupra, p. 45, 46. [q] Ut ſupra, par. 1. c. 5. p. 54, &c. [r] R. Judah Muſcatus in Coſri, fol. 230. 4. Vid. Wolf. Bibliothec. Heb. p. 128.

great *Mekubbal* or *Cabbaliſt*, the head of the univerſity at *Babylon*, as the author of a book of pointing, and which is quoted by *Rittangelius*[s]; and in the *Cabaliſtic Lexicon*[t], under the word נקודים, mention is made of nine points, and their names are given, *Kametz*, *Pathach*, *Zere*, &c. and the uſe that is made of them is obſerved; and *Menaſſeh ben Iſrael*[u] deſcribes the *Cabaliſts*, as employing themſelves in ſearching out the deep myſteries of the law, which are contained in the letters, *points* and muſical *accents*; and a little after, he obſerves, that "the law was given without points, "like the books the *Jews* now have in "their ſynagogues; ſo that when any word "occurs, whoſe letters now are not tied to "certain vowels, men may put what points "they pleaſe to them, and ſo the words "may be read one way and another."

2. ANOTHER reaſon of the *Jews* having an unpointed copy of the law in their ſynagogues is, that it might be a memorial of the oral tradition of points and accents, from the times of *Moſes* to *Ezra*. They ſup-

[s] De Verit. Relig. Chriſt. p. 27. 40. [t] Kabela. Denudata. par. 1. p. 592. [u] Conciliat. in Exod. qu. 50. p. 169. 172. 174. Vid. Leiſden. Philolog. Heb. Mixt. Diſſert. 13. p. 106. & Philolog. Heb. Diſſert. 26.

ſuppoſe the points were of *Moſes*, but not annexed by him to the *Pentateuch*; but that they were delivered and handed down by oral tradition from one to another until *Ezra*, who added them to it; and therefore to keep in memory this wonderful affair, they always have an unpointed copy in their ſynagogues.

3. ANOTHER reaſon why only unpointed copies of the law are kept in the ſynagogues, may be their ſuperſtitious accuracy and exactneſs in writing the law; ſo as to letters, if any are wanting or not rightly placed, or ſimilar ones put for each other, the copy is prophane or rejected; and as it is ſtill more difficult to have the points and accents exactly put, they chooſe to have none at all: hence they ſay [w] a pointed copy is prophane or to be rejected, even though the punctuation is razed out; partly becauſe it will not admit of various ſenſes, as before obſerved, and partly becauſe of the difficulty and almoſt impoſſibility of a perfect pointed copy; and the rather they are indifferent to one, and like as well to have an unpointed one in their ſynagogues, ſince *there*, none but their learned men, as prieſts, *&c.* read in them. 3. BUT

[w] Schulchan Aruch, par. 2. c. 274. ſ. 7.

4. But the chief reaſon of unpointed copies in the ſynagogues ſeems to be, that none but learned men, or ſuch who are well verſed in the *Hebrew* language, ſhould be admitted readers there; for if the copy was pointed, as then, any common man might read it, ſo any ſuch man might be choſen to the office of a reader, though otherwiſe very illiterate; and to prevent any ſuch being introduced into it, is the principal reaſon now, why it is unpointed. And though thoſe who are expert in the language, and are able to read without points, and are choſen into the office of reader in the ſynagogue, and have exerciſed that office many years; yet it is their cuſtom, as one of thoſe readers told *Cocceius* [x] long ago, to prepare themſelves at home by reading out of a pointed copy, for their better, eaſier and more accurate reading in the ſynagogue. And it is their uſual method to this day, for the præcentor of the ſynagogue, though ever ſo well verſed in reading the ſcripture, and ever ſo exact in the knowledge of the *Hebrew* tongue, the day before the ſabbath, to read the paſſages appointed to be read that day out of a pointed

U copy,

[x] Coccei Defenſ. Cod. Heb. ſ. 19. p. 22. Tom. 7.

copy, and thereby make himſelf maſter of the exact reading of them, that ſo the day following he may read them without heſitation or ſtop, and pronounce, as he does, exactly in conformity to the preſent punctuation[y]: and after all it follows not, becauſe the *Jews* now have, and have had for ages paſt, unpointed Bibles in their ſynagogues, which men of learning could read, that they have not, nor had any pointed ones for the common people. It is certain that they had formerly, and have ſuch now; wherefore this is no ſufficient objection againſt the antiquity and uſe of the points, but an argument in favour of them; ſince the true reaſon of having unpointed copies in the ſynagogue is, that none might be admitted readers in them, but ſuch who are ſo perfect in the *Hebrew* language as to be able to read exactly in an unpointed copy, agreeable to the points and accents in a pointed one.

[y] Carpz. v. Critic. ſacr. par. 1. p. 267.

*F I N I S.*

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